

# ИГОРЬ БУНИЧ

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ЧЕЧЕНСКОЙ БОЙНИ



ШЕСТЬ ДНЕЙ  
В БУДЕНОВАХ

## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

I am often reproached for not referring to anyone in my books. Apparently, critics do not understand that I am writing for the general reader, and not doctoral dissertations.

I want to start this book right with a reference... to myself. Finishing the chronicle "The Sword of the President", I warned about the beginning of a new era, the era of political clowning.

"When on the political stage, I warned my readers, clowns are screaming, howling, cursing and fighting, diverting the attention of the audience to themselves, in the depths of the darkened stage there is a change of scenery, a change of actors and preparation for the next act. Be careful! Don't let the next action with deadly tricks take you by surprise."

I wrote these words in December 1993, when the air was still echoing with the echo of tank salvos against the pompous building of the White House in the center of Moscow. The echo was so resonant that there was a fear that at any moment it could turn into an endless deafening cannonade from thousands of artillery and tank barrels, amplified by the roar of multiple rocket launchers and the whistle of aerial bombs.

And so it happened. The intermission between the two death stunt acts was very short.

As it should be in the genre, the second act became much cooler than the first, and, what is most appreciated by the audience, turned out to be with a very unexpected end. Breathtaking: what will be the third action, simply bound to be more enticing than the second?

Igor BUNICH (1995)

## Chapter 1 Prologue

### PROLOGUE OR SILENT HIS

BIKFORD CORD

Drink the cup of bitter betrayal

From the dirty hands of your country...

(From a song composed by Russians

in Grozny in January 1995)

The heavy morning of November 25, 1994, gloomily rose over free Russia. Welcoming the new day, the morning papers wrote that "our democracy is like a traffic light with all three lights on." On the Moscow Currency Exchange, the US dollar jumped by 18 points compared to yesterday and became equal to 3,216 rubles.

In one of the churches of the capital, the 40th day was celebrated since the murder of journalist Dmitry Kholodov, who was torn to pieces by the explosion of a mine planted in his briefcase. President Yeltsin himself took the investigation into this assassination under his personal control. However, as the capital's cynics assured, "the president's personal control" guarantees that the killers will never be found. Moreover, the late Kholodov, as a correspondent for the scandalous newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets, darted around Chechnya and adjacent territories, trying to find out where trains with weapons and ammunition were coming from to free Ichkeria with such a busy traffic schedule as on the eve of the Battle of Kursk.

"We don't give a damn about this journalist, born of a miserable newspaper!" declared the candidate for the future presidents of Free Russia, State Duma deputy Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovskiy, as always, in a somewhat crude form, bringing to the attention of the people the opinion of the presidential entourage. Zhirinovskiy spoke in Krasnodar to his supporters. But they were also somewhat shocked. Catholic and God-fearing people do not like such harsh statements about the dead, even if they did not sympathize with them during their lifetime. Therefore, at this point, the speech of the leader was not interrupted by deafening applause ...

As a result of the forty-day investigation into the murder of Kholodov, the FGC, once again confirming its high reputation, came to the sensational conclusion that

"The murder of Kholodov is connected with his professional activities," General Alexander Mikhailov, head of the Center for Public Relations of the Federal Grid Company, told the population. The general's face shone with the importance and significance of the message made, as if he and his colleagues had discovered a new physical law.

The fact that the FSK still remembered the murder of Kholodov forty days later caused some surprise, since the Federal Counterintelligence Service had an abyss of its own cases, compared with which the murder of some little-known journalist looked simple

funny.

First, by personal decree of the president of the Federal Grid Company, investigative functions were restored, investigative departments and departments were restored, which, in turn, led to the resumption of a huge number of criminal cases left over from the supposedly dissolved KGB.

The old "Chekist" detention center in Lefortovo was also returning to its native bosom. Realizing that such gifts had to be worked off somehow, the FSK began to unleash a new wave of spy mania, accusing, for starters, the Sores Foundation of espionage, on whose money Russian science, literature and art lived, like in an orphanage.

Apparently, a decision was made "so that they die," and therefore the "Sores Foundation" began to drive away the "orphans" abandoned by Russia-mother with a KGB stick. In exactly the same way, those dying of hunger in the Volga region were once driven away from the "Organization of American Relief" ...

But there were more important things. Employees of the Federal Grid Company with cases full of bundles of 50,000 banknotes traveled around the garrisons near Moscow, including the elite Kantemirovskaya and Tamanskaya divisions, having private conversations there with some officers, previously selected on the recommendation of the Special Departments. Bundles of banknotes disappeared into officers' pockets, and the officers themselves mysteriously disappeared from their military units ...

And life went on as usual.

On TV screens again there was advertising "MMM".

Suddenly, the death of the president of Chara Bank, Vladimir Ilyich Rachuk, was announced, having "warmed up" his intelligent clients for billions of rubles.

In Moscow, the trial of General Silvestrov continued, having melted somewhere about 40,000 tons of ammunition that once belonged to the Western Group of Forces, now defunct.

The Moscow police arrested a craftsman who made bombs disguised as beer cans, and the priest father Baranov consecrated the premises of the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper, where an explosion occurred that killed Dmitry Kholodov. The Puls Tushino newspaper, which is close to the FSK, compared this action with the "consecration (?) of a brothel." Democracy sparkled with versatility, like an expensive diamond.

From somewhere on the outskirts of the state, the shooting was muffled, to which everyone had long been accustomed, not paying any attention to it at all ...

Almost no one paid attention to the fact that the "presidential sharpeners" were again in motion, foreshadowing the shedding of blood.

One of these "sharpenings" Ruslan Khasbulatov, thrust for some time into the boot of the Lefortovo prison and taken out of there under the "Duma amnesty", reappeared, sparkling with its uneven edges in bumps and burrs. She showed up in Chechnya, leaving her luxurious apartment in Moscow, about which all the capital's newspapers once enthusiastically wrote. Leaving, of course, not forever, because it was hard to believe that Khasbulatov was ready to exchange this apartment for a modest cottage in the Chechen village of Tolstoy-Yurt, where he settled.

Ruslan Imranovich never suffered from false modesty. "

It's time to understand, - the deposed "speaker" explained to correspondents, -

that in Chechnya I am a generally recognized leader." And in his voice there were ominous notes from the times of the October putsch of 1993. Khasbulatov was dressed in an old-style officer's jacket, but without shoulder straps and looked very militant, although he considered himself a "peacemaker". "Sharp" can perform peacekeeping functions only when put to someone's throat.

Khasbulatov, with his characteristic complete misunderstanding of the real situation, so clearly demonstrated during the October events, for some reason believed that he had already grabbed the throat of Chechen President General Dudayev.

The general himself, having settled in the pompous building of the former republican committee of the CPSU, renamed the presidential palace, watched Khasbulatov with a certain mixture of contempt and incomprehension, with which generals usually observe too noisy and

active spats.

Some misunderstanding, which the activities of his old friend Ruslan Khasbulatov caused in General Dudaev, indicated that the President of Chechnya, like any general, and especially a nationalist general, did not know well the history of the country that handed him officer epaulettes at one time. And the country that gave him the shoulder straps of a general and made him president with parting words

"to eat as much sovereignty as he is able to swallow", still, in essence, did not have its own history and used the rich experience of those who died in the Bosse of the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire.

It can, of course, be stereotypically said that since the declaration of Chechnya as an independent and sovereign state in the summer of 1991, Dudayev has been a bone in the throat of all the leading persons in the Kremlin. But to say so is to err greatly against the truth. "Bone in the throat" Dudayev was not for anyone in Moscow. If it can be compared with anything, then, rather, with a drug pill tucked under the tongue to excite and increase efficiency in an environment of obsessive hallucinations.

Narcotic hallucination - that's what Dudayev was constantly for the new leadership in Moscow. Recalled on the recommendation of Khasbulatov from the Baltic states, where he served as commander of a bomber division, and urgently promoted to major general, Dzhokhar Dudayev was sent to Chechnya to overthrow the communist regime of Zavgayev-Semenov and establish new

"human values". In case of unforeseen circumstances in the Caucasus and the pro-communist uprisings expected there, the newly minted general had the widest powers from Moscow, which either do not lend themselves to any interpretation at all, or can be interpreted in any way.

Ruslan Khasbulatov, catapulted from a shabby professorial chair to the role of second person in the state, suffered from decompression sickness in such an acute form that he could not see anything around him except the sweetest hallucinations. One of them, in the inflamed imagination of the "speaker", was the slow-witted and burdened with all sorts of vices, the first Russian president, whose removal from power seemed to be a simple and purely technical matter. And Khasbulatov was already voluptuously trying on the "Monomakh's hat", while considering General Dudayev as one of his natural allies, sent to Chechnya with the only task to carry out his, Khasbulatov's, orders. And the speaker, living in hallucinations, did not doubt at all that all his orders would be approved by the president.

Thus, General Dudayev, despite all his nationalistic pseudo-rhetoric, for a long time was the tip of the Moscow spear, put to the throat of the North Caucasus.

After the failure of the so-called "August coup" in Moscow in 1991, on a direct order from Moscow, armed "Dudaev's guardsmen" seized the building of the Council of Ministers, the radio and television center, and on September 6 the building of the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. Dudayev was not yet president, but had a rather long and not entirely clear position of chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Congress of the Chechen People. In order not to enter into a confrontation with his old friend from the war in Afghanistan, General Ruslan Aushev, who claims (as a senior in rank) to be the unquestioning leader (president) of Ingushetia, Dudayev's first act was the separation of Chechnya from Ingushetia.

September 15, 1991, almost at the same time as similar events in Moscow, the former

Dudayev proposed to the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, assembled in Grozny, to dissolve itself. Since such was the directive from Moscow, where at the same time and almost by the same methods the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was "self-dissolving", all the deputies; The Chechen-Ingushetia dutifully dissolved themselves. New elections were scheduled for November 18, 1991.

On October 5 of the same year, as throughout the country, the activities of the old KGB structures were suspended in Chechnya, the activities of councils at all levels were paralyzed, and on October 27 free elections of the president of the republic were held, in which General Dudayev confidently won. He did his job and looks with interest at the activities of Khasbulatov. That will be fun when he becomes the dictator of Russia.

But, unlike his friend and fellow tribesman, General Dudayev, if he suffers from decompression sickness due to the jump from colonel to the presidency, then to a much lesser extent. Himself serving for many as a narcotic hallucinate, the general suffers much less from hallucinations. He is still a former pilot and knows how to get out of decompression sickness into the harsh reality of the world around him. Only a smart and decisive politician, who understands the aspirations of the people, can stay in the presidential chair in a republic like Chechnya, without being an imam.

General Dudayev was not an imam. Moreover, he was and remained a communist, although he sincerely did not understand this, and if he was a general, then, of course, a Soviet one. And decisive. At one time, his bombers were ready to drop an atomic bomb on the rebellious destroyer Watchtower, who was trying to escape to Sweden. And they would have brought down, because General (then Colonel) Dudayev knew how to make sure that his orders were carried out.

Generals who have left the armed forces, becoming politicians, always experience some confusion when faced with a society that is not shackled by the power and strength of the four Charters (Disciplinary, Combat, Naval and Internal Service). That is why they begin to feverishly search for some kind of unifying idea that can unite large masses of people who do not know how and do not want to walk in formation. So, General Sterligov tried (and is trying) to become a national leader on the ideas of anti-Semitism, General Rutskoy on the close to the previous idea of Orthodox sovereignty, General Varennikov on the ideas of communism, mixed with the blood of several external wars.

Since all the listed generals, chosen at random, do not really believe themselves and, most importantly, are very poorly versed in the essence of their own unifying ideas, things are not going at all as brilliantly as they would like.

Dudayev is another matter! He didn't have to search or agonize over such an idea. This idea was in the air, making it dense and tense, because it was generated by the Chechen land for at least two centuries. It was the idea of national independence. And, to be more precise and understandable, independence from Russia. Attached to Russia in a war that (officially) lasted for more than 50 years, the Chechens did everything to somehow separate from Russia.

In Russia, and later in the USSR, such sentiments were suppressed almost at the level of "unspoken thoughts" and, of course, exclusively through brutal violence and coercion by the most barbaric methods, which have the generalized name "genocide".

In terms of the scale of persecution, the methods of genocide (from mass exterminations and deportations to contemptuous discrimination and defamation of the entire people, as a nation of criminals covered by a suicide complex), the fate of the Chechens can only be compared with the fate of the Jews. But if the Jews, in their thousand-year struggle for survival, managed to put things in such a way that the whole world reacts painfully and sharply to any manifestation of anti-Semitism,



no matter where it comes from, the Chechens have not yet succeeded.

The world knew nothing about them, and, worst of all, was completely uninterested in them. Kaffirs, Zulus, Australian aborigines and even, excuse me, Canadian seals, when they were threatened with extermination or their civil (!) rights were infringed, aroused more emotions in the Western world than the tragedy of the Chechen people, which lasted 200 years.

Chained to Russia by a strong chain of two centuries of genocide, the Chechen people, together with their unlucky mother country, are forced to endure endless political cataclysms, military catastrophes and economic collapses that hit Russia with the fatal inevitability of the sea surf. No one in Chechnya has ever seriously thought about how they will live, having gained independence, having neither neighboring independent states, nor access to the sea, nor even a navigable river. If only to separate from Russia!

Dudayev saddled this idea. After all, he was a Chechen and learned part of the tragic history of his people in his own skin. When he announced the creation of an independent republic of Ichkeria, it did not arouse any special emotions, not only in the whole world, which is quite understandable, but also in Moscow, where this decision, apparently, was tacitly agreed upon. The sharp reaction to this event from General Rutskoi, who was then vice president, was quickly suppressed and ultimately cost Rutskoi his political influence, which ultimately led him to the prison bunk in Lefortovo. In Moscow, many people even liked to have as part of Russia, as it were, an independent state, something like Lesotho in South Africa, which created a lot of pleasant and useful opportunities from laundering "dirty" money to using the armed forces of an "independent state" as an instrument of their unpredictable domestic policy, and with known alignment and external.

Particularly attractive, in the opinion of Moscow, were the armed forces of the "independent republic of Ichkeria", which they hoped to manipulate at their own discretion, to which there were no fundamental objections from Grozny. There was even an opinion to turn the new "independent republic" into a kind of "Caucasian gendarme" controlled from Moscow, which gave the latter an excellent opportunity, if necessary, to hide behind the dull curtain of Chechen independence.

Indeed, the situation in the Caucasus from the Terek to the border with Iran and Turkey was destabilized by the champions of the Russian-Soviet empire to such an extent that everyone was already fighting each other with increasing bitterness. Georgia fought with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, North Ossetia fought with Ingushetia, Armenia and Azerbaijan launched a full-scale war against each other for Nagorno-Karabakh.

In all wars in the region, tanks, multiple launch rocket systems and aircraft were actively used. Moreover, no one, as it were, knew whose aircraft it was, since its affiliation was shyly hidden behind the stereotypical wording of the Korean War: "without identification marks." But war is war, and downed Russian pilots in Armenian prisons, while awaiting death sentences (for mercenarism), told tales about some Azerbaijani intermediaries who hired them along with aircraft at a price list of \$ 2,000 for a sortie. Approximately the same thing and under the same circumstances were told by Russian special forces in a Baku prison, having been taken prisoner by an entire unit.

Moscow's hairy ears stuck out too clearly against the bloody backdrop of flaring ethnic conflicts, which unnerved many in the Kremlin, making its way to the "international arena" with a bewitching smile of the guarantor of liberalism, freedom and democracy. And therefore, along the Kremlin corridors, the opinion began to spread about bringing the army of the free republic of Ichkeria from a semi-partisan into a more modern form.

Chechens are born warriors who have retained purely medieval traits of nobility and valor in the military profession, along with, alas, medieval cruelty. Where, where, and even in Moscow they knew about it perfectly. Those Chechens who fought in their native mountains with units of the Russian, and then the Red Army, as well as those who fought the Germans in the Second World War as part of the Red Army, all left the best memory of themselves as valiant soldiers, ready for any self-sacrifice. And although there was never a special move for the Chechens in the Soviet army, the Soviet General Staff, having plunged into the Afghan adventure, was forced to form special units from Chechens and Ingush, which can be conditionally called mountain rifle special forces.

The results exceeded all expectations, and even plans arose to deploy large formations on their basis, something like the "wild divisions" of the First World War. However, these plans were not implemented, mainly because of the humiliating defeat (more, of course, moral than military) suffered by the Soviet army in Afghanistan. In addition, Soviet Russia, being an almost openly racist state, remembered national minorities only in cases when they were given the opportunity to shed blood for the empire, in all other cases treating them with muffled but obvious disdain. Chechmeks!

In early 1992, all three heroes of the August putsch visited Chechnya: Marshal Shaposhnikov, General of the Army Kobets, and then Colonel General Grachev. All of them were not only satisfied with what in the official language is called the "building of the armed forces" of the young independent republic, but also signed a number of agreements and protocols of intent regarding further progress in this area. It is interesting to see how the signature of Marshal Shaposhnikov gradually disappears on all these agreements and protocols, and the signature of General of the Army Grachev, who replaced Shaposhnikov as Minister of Defense, is increasingly being approved. Shaposhnikov himself gallantly went into the shadow of a huge monster called "Rosvooruzhenie", ready at any moment to send any weapon and in any quantity, with all types of payment: on credit, in installments and by barter, to anywhere in the world.

Out of harm's way, all the troops of the former Soviet army were withdrawn from Chechnya. For some reason, everyone thinks that it was a purely spontaneous process: the army, fearing Dudayev's threats and tired of his ultimatums, simply withdrew and went home, leaving weapons, ammunition and military camps, including a couple of strategic missile bases, at full disposal government of the newly independent state. For whom this version is designed is not clear.

The withdrawal of troops was carried out, as it should be in the civilized world, within the framework of an interstate agreement reached and signed at the highest level. However, contrary to popular belief, the reserves that were left to Dudayev by the former Soviet, and now Russian units leaving Chechnya, were ridiculously small. Two weeks of intense fighting. Therefore, a new agreement was signed on additional deliveries of weapons and ammunition to the Republic of Ichkeria; something, but weapons in Russia were enough not only to arm such a small republic, but also to re-equip all the other armies of our planet, including the American one.

However, unlike in Soviet times, when mountains of weapons were supplied to anyone virtually free of charge in response to vague promises to recognize and love Lenin's unfading ideas, such a service was not rendered to General Dudayev. On the contrary, in return for Moscow's generosity, he had to provide the Kremlin with some services that can be called very delicate. The friendship between Moscow and Grozny was supposed to be equally sincere and secret. As part of this friendship, General Dudayev, in particular (and above all) had to "launder" the money received from the sale "to the left" of a huge amount of weapons that once belonged to the Western Group of Forces. And get some of it in kind.



It is simply amazing that someone managed to make a secret of the disappearance from the gigantic warehouses of the Western Group of Forces of seventy thousand tons of ammunition, which was supposed to win the third world war. The Bosnian Serbs and Muslims received something, but most of it was sent to the army of the Republic of Ichkeria, which was gaining strength.

When it became necessary for edifying purposes to take away from Georgia, which had imagined itself, its ancestral province of Abkhazia, the Chechen army perfectly demonstrated its combat capabilities. Through the decorative "Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus" a unit of the armed forces of Chechnya was sent to Abkhazia under the command of the then Major Shamil Basayev. This unit, which later received the code name of the "Abkhazian Battalion", defeated the elite units of President Yeltsin's old friend in the Politburo, Eduard Shevardnadze, stormed Sukhumi and hoisted the proud green flag of the republic over the burned building of the former city committee of the CPSU next to the inconspicuous banner of Abkhazia (which no one knew). Ichkeria, which, too, for some reason no one paid attention to.

The Russian army provided Basayev with air support, while the Black Sea Fleet, waving the naval flags of the non-existent country of the Soviet Union in the wind, provided support from the sea. The first baptism of fire of the "allies" on the territory of Abkhazia ended in complete triumph and the creation of another independent state in the Caucasus.[1]

However, professionals from the GRU, who observed the actions of Chechen fighters during the hostilities, although they noted their undoubted militancy and selfless valor, drew attention to the lack of professionalism, especially at all levels of control and management. They listened to the opinion of professionals, and a decision was made that formed the basis of another "interstate" agreement on the training of Chechen fighters in training centers where the GRU special forces learn their intricate skills.

If someone thinks that the GRU special forces are the same as the OMON or some SOBR, then he is severely mistaken. It's not even the Airborne Forces or the Marine Corps. It's much more serious. Before the demise of the Soviet Union, the total strength of the GRU spetsnaz was roughly equivalent to three brigades. If millions of viewers watched with emotion how the airborne paratroopers smashed brickwork with their foreheads, and the marines carried a medium tank up to their necks in cold water, then no one, except perhaps Dmitry Kholodov, saw the exercises of the GRU special forces. But even he didn't have time to tell anyone about it.

Once upon a time, three brigades of this special forces planned to conquer the old woman-Europe and, undoubtedly, they would have done so if the "Kremlin elders" were not afraid of nuclear retaliation. They really did not want to while away the rest of their days in underground bunkers.

However, there were plans to seize all the Western command posts for the control of nuclear weapons even before the start of the conflict by the forces of the same GRU special forces, which would have made Europe completely unarmed when it poured into

"rattling with armor, sparkling with the brilliance of steel", an all-destroying avalanche of several dozen thousand Soviet tanks.

So it probably would have happened if most of the forces of the so-called "nuclear retaliation" had not been deployed in the ocean aboard the almost elusive American submarines, where the GRU special forces, for all their skill, were, alas, not to reach. In the West, this was well understood, and in the numerous scenarios of the course (and outcome) of the Third World War, on which NATO generals honed their strategic thoughts, the almost complete capture of Europe by the Soviet army and a powerful strike with nuclear missiles from the depths of the ocean at once on 60 major cities were always envisaged Soviet Union. A

therefore peace and grace reigned in Europe.

Nevertheless, the GRU special forces continued to hone their combat training. If you do not go into details, it (combat training) was as follows: even before the start of official hostilities, special forces detachments numbering from 30 to 200 people (depending on the task) begin a campaign through the territory of the intended enemy, dragging everything necessary for a two-week battle of the so-called "high efficiency", i.e., almost continuous firing during the specified period.

Even if at the same time the entire enemy security service was alerted and, as they say, put on their ears, they should not have noticed anything. The detachment, having left the conditional point A, seemed to dematerialize in order to materialize only at the indicated point B, and then only conditionally. A sign of its materialization should have been the destruction or capture of the intended object, a specific person or group of persons (say, some large headquarters, communications center, or even the cabinet of ministers along with the president).

There were also various elegant methods of persuading the captured president to announce the surrender of his country. Etc. At the same time, the battle was supposed to be avoided by all means, but if this battle was necessary, the special forces knew how to conduct it in such a way that the enemy got the impression that a whole combined arms army with all its rear and support equipment had come to visit them. From the outside, the hypervigilant gaze of some highly experienced counter-terrorism policeman should have seen nothing more than a group of young men and women "hipping" in some used minibuses, where, even after a thorough search, nothing more criminal could be found, than pornographic postcards.

The GRU special forces quarterly, that is, seasonally, conducted their exercises, both on the territory of the USSR and in the countries where they were to operate in the event of the outbreak of hostilities. The exercises outside the USSR, due to some specifics of Western countries, have always been much easier than on their own territory, where their conditions were much tougher.

The scenarios and introductory ones were very diverse, but the average task of the GRU detachment looked like this:

The detachment came out from somewhere near Minsk, where several training centers were deployed, and had to proceed to the Crimea or the Caucasus, where a network of training camps and bases was also deployed. On the way, say, in Kiev or Rostov, the detachment was supposed to kidnap some general in the rank of district commander or his deputy, conditionally (and sometimes not) blow up and burn several predetermined objects and dissolve in one of their secret bases. Shortly before arriving at this base, the kidnapped general was released, since it was forbidden to deliver him to the base in the interests of secrecy. (Such bases, of course, existed not only on the territory of the USSR). However, such a "training" campaign was considered easy by the special forces and was carried out under the described conditions exclusively for the first run-in of the "youngsters". And even then not always. Usually, the exercises on their own territory took place in incredibly difficult conditions. Even before the detachment went on a training raid, all the mountains and regional departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB were notified in advance that a group of dangerous criminals, having made a collective escape from places of deprivation of liberty, made their way to the southern regions of the country, intending to commit a whole series of robberies along the way. At the same time, as a rule, the intended route of the detachment was indicated quite accurately in the orientation, and the special forces themselves were warned that if they fell into the hands of "law enforcement agencies", they would not have to count on any outside help. Under Soviet law, this always meant almost cert

death, and in the language of special forces meant nothing more than exercises with a conditional approximation to the real situation ...

Alas, as always happened in the history of our unfortunate Fatherland, the army, aimed at Europe and America and trained accordingly, had to act in the conditions of a wild, mountainous, Asian country, where all the methods, instructions (and even shoes) worked out to the smallest detail turned out to be completely ineffective, forcing improvisation on the go. But there was very little room for improvisation. One European type of special forces has already betrayed them headlong, leading to unnecessary and offensive losses and even to major failures. But even in these nightmarish conditions, the GRU special forces carried out several very daring operations in Karachi and Islamabad, and generally felt at home in Peshever. But for this, a large number of Chechens, Ingush and Dagestanis had to be poured into its ranks.

The defeat in Afghanistan and the collapse of the communist regime and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which soon followed, although they hurt the GRU special forces, as well as all the other power structures of the collapsed empire, nevertheless allowed them to retain the backbone of their unique units and the main bases for their training. . It was on these bases that it was decided to train the armed forces of the Republic of Ichkeria a little.

As a result, General Dudayev received at his disposal two whole brigades of the GRU special forces, while in Russia by that time there were one and a half of them.

From his strategic post in Grozny, General Dudayev, controlling the traditional routes of Russia to the south of Transcaucasia and beyond (and, of course, in the opposite direction), relying on the most powerful army, already significantly superior to the understaffed and dispersed over a large territory troops of the North Caucasus Military District. I could feel quite firmly, passing many of the Moscow morals past my ears.

Unfortunately, General Dudayev, although he considered himself the "freely elected president" of an independent republic, never became one, turning from a division commander into an army commander and considering the whole of Chechnya as one large garrison in which the logistics and logistics service was engaged in the resale of oil , aluminum and weapons flowing from the Russian "leftists". At the same time, the new government did not pay the slightest attention to the local population, both the native Chechen, who officially became independent, and the Russian, who fell into an ambiguous, if not idiotic position. Wages for workers in the petrochemical industry of the unique and one-of-a-kind complex built during the Soviet era came from Russia, and the income from it, although declining every month, went to Dudayev's treasury. From Russia came energy supplies, all kinds of social security, and if there were any failures in this respect, then no more than throughout the country.

Thus, the young republic of Ichkeria did not die of hunger only due to the fact that it was provided by Russia not God knows how, of course, but no one was particularly poor there. The government of Dudayev spent its own money, proceeds from the sale of oil, weapons, the sale of fake bank notes and drugs, to strengthen its own armed forces and to be active in political activity.

Moscow's first dissatisfaction was expressed by Grozny's timid attempts to achieve recognition of Chechnya's independence by the world community. This issue was never discussed at secret negotiations and was a kind of Dudayev's amateur performance.

We started, as is usual in the modern world, with the United States. Although the officials of the State Department, where Dudayev's emissaries arrived, did not understand what they wanted from them and what kind of country they were talking about, Chechnya Ichkeria was not found in any reference book

former USSR, and on American geographical maps, Georgia or Georgia began immediately after the Terek, as it was written on the map. Moscow reacted sharply and even with a touch of hysteria, again loudly declaring Chechnya as an integral part of Russia. And this was already a violation of previously reached agreements. No one even thought of forbidding Dudayev from any improvisations in the international arena, since the new leaders of Russia in the depths of their souls considered all agreements with Dudayev as a game of kings and kings, which is often played by teachers with older kindergarten groups. And they are sincerely surprised to learn that children take their "toy" titles seriously. The first quarrels between the "strategic allies" were insignificant and, perhaps, depending on the situation only on the contracting parties, it could well be settled. But it wasn't.

Winds of radical change were blowing over both Russia and Chechnya.

And if anyone thinks that these were the mild winds of a growing democracy, on behalf of which Moscow was so fond of making statements, then they would be completely wrong. These were already completely different winds, gusts turning into a storm.

Moscow has suffered for centuries from the fact that both the Russian and the Soviet, and now the Russian leadership, traditionally divided, as Arkady Volsky aptly put it, into the party of war and the party of fools, did not know how to correctly assess the situation that had arisen in the country and outside it.

The first and very big mistake of Moscow was for some reason the belief that prevailed there since 1989 that the Afghan war, thank God, is over. The logical chain of this belief is completely incomprehensible, but it reigned in all spheres of Soviet and post-Soviet society, excitedly splashing out through all the media. Apparently, it was not even self-deception, but a sincere delusion, which is very characteristic of the Russian mentality: since I have finished fighting and rioting, it means peace.

In fact, Soviet troops, for a reason that no one even today is able to explain, invaded a neighboring Muslim country, rampaged there for 10 years, exterminating a good third of the population and leveling about half of the settlements to the ground, in the end they were from there knocked out by the invincible spirit of popular resistance and, having gone home, decided that the war was over. Far from it. As has always happened in the past, the retreating army brought the enemy army along with its ideology into its own territory.

The collapse of the USSR, which quickly followed, allowed this sad event to be amortized somewhat. The fighting that unfolded on the territory of Tajikistan and the countries of the Transcaucasus, which had become sovereign states by that time, was managed to be presented as a result of internal strife, and not as a continuation of the Afghan war. And, meanwhile, if one can still argue about the military defeat of the USSR in Afghanistan, then the ideological defeat of the Soviet empire was complete and crushing.

The opposition of the already dying Marxist-Leninist dogma to the growing strength of Islamic fundamentalism ended in the complete victory of the latter, and the formation on the territory of the former USSR after the collapse of the communist regime of a complete (and nothing concrete has been filled so far) ideological vacuum allowed Islamic fundamentalism, sharply honed by a ten-year bloody war, to rush over the head of the Russian troops into the territory of his traditional reverence, turning everything Russian and Russian into enemies by definition. Infidels, infidels who humiliate Islam and kept Muslim peoples in slavery for many years.

Bewildered Moscow could not answer this challenge with anything other than multiple rocket launchers.

fire. The communist ideology died, the Christian church, degraded along with the entire Soviet society, was still weak to be some kind of ideological force, no one was ready for such a turn of events. It remained, as usual, to rely only on the army and from time to time to show on TV the severed heads of Russian soldiers against the backdrop of not Afghan, but Tajik mountains.

But if Central Asia still protected the militant Islamists from Russian territories as a powerful buffer, then Chechnya adjoined directly to Russia and looked like an excellent springboard for those who, after the destruction of the sacred mosque in Herat by Soviet artillery, swore on the Kaaba not to stop the war until then until the green banner of the Prophet is raised over the ruins of the Moscow Kremlin. Dudayev was overwhelmed by this war.

Like every Soviet general, he, if he had any opinion about religion, was only determined by the classics of Marxism and hammered into his head at countless political classes. And he himself remained an atheist, which allowed him, with a light conscience, to drop bombs on the heads of his theoretical coreligionists in Afghanistan.

However, having saddled the national idea of his people, the general fell into an Islamic whirlpool, which he tried to resist at first, but was dragged into it with his head, twisted and thrown onto the rug of the mosque in a pose common to any devout Muslim.

He had to be doubly faithful, because no one in Chechnya forgot his past, as well as the fact that the general, violating the customs of his ancestors, chose a Russian wife for himself.

And if quite recently, within the framework of the plan agreed with Khasbulatov, General Dudayev agreed to declare independent Chechnya "the last surviving (or first liberated) bastion of the Soviet Union" and invited Mikhail Gorbachev to arrive in Grozny and from there to fulfill his duties as president of the USSR, starting fight against the Moscow separatists who expelled Gorbachev from the Kremlin, then quite unexpectedly for everyone (and possibly for himself) the former aviation general spoke in the voice of Iranian ayatollahs. And the television of the republic showed him performing namaz. It looked as natural and sincere as General Sterligov's sign of the cross.

Khasbulatov was the first to be alarmed. Being practically all his conscious life on ideological work in Moscow, the "speaker" of the Supreme Soviet of Free Russia was even more distant from religion than General Dudayev. Moreover, the origin did not give him the opportunity to join the revived Orthodoxy. However, this was not part of his plans at all. Devilish vanity and decompression sickness forced him to greedily look at the first seat of the country, and the whole logic of events drew him more and more into opposition to President Yeltsin and his course, although President Yeltsin by and large did not have any course. And with Khasbulatov, he was already definitely scheduled back to the bright past. In fact, only the President remained in his path. Further, he already saw himself (and, it must be said, not without reason) as the chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Russia and the leader of some party, that is, the good old general secretary, whose nationality, as the history of the USSR showed, never mattered in principle. Such a political course was bound to gather around Khasbulatov all the remnants of the late CPSU, now embarking on the platform of the most terrifying Great Russian nationalism, the conservative military, the former leaders of the KGB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other punitive bodies, both of all-Union and republican significance, and part of the propagandized

them the population.

At the peak of all this orgy, Vice-President Rutskoi ran over to Khasbulatov, and all his deputies ran from Khasbulatov to Yeltsin: Shumeiko, Filatov and Ryabov.

Thus, Ruslan Khasbulatov, against his will, fell into the whirlpool of Russian nationalism, looking even more ridiculous against its background than General Dudayev in the mosque.

But neither of them had a choice. This broke the coordinated plan, which, although adventurous, was a plan nonetheless. Khasbulatov was already guarded in Moscow by the Chechen guards, seconded by Dudayev, all the hotels of the Russian capital were crowded with Chechens, hiding in anticipation of a signal for a coup d'état. The very word "Chechen" terrified the Moscow man in the street; and one can imagine the situation if the Chechens in Moscow would suddenly have the force of law!

But words have already been heard from Grozny at the presidential level about the greatness of Allah and his prophet Mohammed, about the Satanism of Moscow and about "Russianism, as the worst form of fascism", which Russia is sick with and can only be cured with the help of a neutron bomb.

In response, circling in the maelstrom of militant Russian nationalism, Khasbulatov suddenly spoke about Russia "great and indivisible", about the "cathedralism" (although he never learned to pronounce this tricky word correctly) of the Russian people and about Chechnya as an integral part of Russia. And what was left for him to do, while dreaming of the chair of the dictator of Russia?

Friction arose between the allies, which led to a secret meeting, where both sides accused each other of being idiotic and parted without agreeing on anything.

Dudayev was the first to strike, announcing the recall of all the deputies elected from Chechnya to the Supreme Soviet of Russia. It was a personal blow to Khasbulatov, who at one time was elected from the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Thus, General Dudayev hung his friend over the void: he, as it were, was no longer a deputy, but nevertheless he headed the Supreme Council.

I must say that Khasbulatov was very frightened. Not at all, however, that General Dudayev deprived him of his parliamentary powers.

"

And who is Dudaev? - asked the speaker, who went into a rage, -

Who is he at all, to deprive someone of authority? Wasn't it me, after all, who promoted him to the generals, so that he would now command me?

Ruslan Imranovich was frightened that the Chechen guards, seconded at his disposal by General Dudayev, or one of the numerous militants who filled the capital's hotels, would receive an order to kill him and send his head to Grozny, where it would be put on public display on Sheikh Mansur Square to great joy of both Russian and Chechen presidents...

Khasbulatov's nerves give way and he gives the order: to evict all Chechens from Moscow, as if he were not the speaker of the parliament of a democratic country, but the capital's governor-general, acting in a state of emergency. In addition, the "speaker" who has fallen into hysterics sets the Moscow police department for combating banditry against his own guards.

In turn, Dudayev deprives Khasbulatov of Chechen citizenship, which he never had, giving the political opponents of the speaker the opportunity to call the all-powerful "head of representative power" (

non-existent title invented for himself by Khasbulatov) "political

BOMZHOM.

But the pinpricks from Grozny are not only no longer able to stop the speaker striving for power, but, on the contrary, it would seem that they are whipping him up even more. President Yeltsin is already miraculously avoiding "impeachment" in the Supreme Soviet, referendums are already making noise all over Russia under the immortal slogans "Yes-Yes-No-Yes", and now the windows of the capital's city hall are falling, Ostankino is on fire, tanks are hitting the building of the Supreme Council, and Ruslan Khasbulatov are taken out of the burning building, taken to the gloomy Lefortovo remand prison.

All this time, the quarreling "branches" of democratic Russian power were not up to General Dudayev, although evil tongues claim that it was the Chechen president who provoked the October events in Moscow, handing over to his "strategic ally" Yeltsin some documents about the plans of his other "ally" Khasbulatov .

Nevertheless, many drew attention to the fact that it was at this time that almost all organizations and parties of a fascist and semi-fascist persuasion, which in Russia by that time had already bred visibly, invisibly, unexpectedly together and disciplined, as befits any government structure, switched from hysterically shrill propaganda against the Jews to the same tonality persecution of people from the Caucasus. At the same time, the "tonality" remained the same. Only now, instead of Zionists, Jews and Jews, "blacks" or even stronger "black-asseds" were commemorated. And at the official level, like a devil from a snuffbox, a new brilliant definition of "the person of Caucasian nationality" has appeared.

At the same time, it is interesting to note that many mass media, both electronic and paper, which under no circumstances would allow themselves to get dirty about anti-Semitism, readily and enthusiastically joined in the persecution of people from the Caucasus.

Even the patriarch of Russian culture and democratic intelligentsia, Academician Dmitry. Likhachev, irritated by some antics of Khas Bulatov on the eve of the referendum and, apparently remembering the bitter days spent in the Gulag during Stalin's time, voiced an appeal on the air:

"Enough of these Caucasians!"

In many cities, pogroms of collective farm markets took place, where merchants from the Caucasus were beaten, and in some cases even killed. On the streets of post-coup Moscow, declared in a state of emergency, they seized everyone who looked even a little like a "person of Caucasian nationality".

The head of the administration of the Krasnodar Territory, Nikolai Yegorov, surpassed everyone by deporting from the territory of the region in forty-eight hours all the "blacks", mainly Armenians, who fled at one time from the massacre in Azerbaijan and from the horrors of the war for Nagorno-Karabakh. The organizational skills of Nikolai Egorov did not go unnoticed. He was urgently recalled to Moscow and appointed ... Minister for Nationalities and Regional Affairs

politics.

Soon he was to apply his abilities on a much larger scale. Together with two former KGB generals assigned to him as deputies, Yegorov quickly and skillfully transformed the department entrusted to him into the fourth power ministry. And the employees of the Ministry of Nationalities Affairs, which, due to Russia's multinational specifics alone, should have been the most humanitarian of all, suddenly showed off in camouflage and vests.

Nikolai Yegorov himself was a typical representative of the former provincial party nomenklatura, which snatched up leadership positions after the death of the CPSU and perfectly



adapted to post-communist reality. With the money of the late party, Yegorov founded a bank with a very patriotic name "Kubansky", since he was an honorary colonel of the Kuban Cossack army. However, the office of the "Kuban Bank" was located away from sin on the island of Cyprus, where everything was commanded by Yegorov's daughter, who was legally married to a person

"Chechen nationality". "Kuban Bank" laundered money for oil and aluminum passing through the free Republic of Ichkeria and served as an intermediary in the purchase of weapons and ammunition through the Izhevsk factories sent to the Republic of Ichkeria.

The military factories of Russia and the CIS countries, sitting without money, willingly and with pleasure sent Dudayev the latest weapons and communication systems that were not yet in service with the Russian army, which had nothing to pay for these weapons. The powerful monsters of the military-industrial complex, mastering the market economy, could handle any obstacles to deliver weapons to the client who paid for them. However, for the sake of truth, we note that no one has put up any barriers, since all the events described above that took place in Moscow have not yet affected Russian Ichkerian relations in any way.

Moreover, these relations every day were filled with more and more meaning and content. After the elimination of Ruslan Khasbulatov, who had imagined himself, from the political arena, they even became more sincere than before.

Although Chechnya has not yet been recognized by anyone, so as not to irritate Moscow and not challenge its claims to the status of a great power, unofficially Grozny was visited almost daily by the most exotic foreign delegations. The officers of the Turkish General Staff were replaced by a delegation of Iranian oilmen, who arrived together with a company of Afghan Mujahideen specialists in reconnaissance and sabotage activities. Frequent guests of President Dudayev were various delegations of oppositionists from the CIS countries, some of which, fleeing persecution in their homeland, remained in Grozny for a long time, turning the Republic of Ichkeria into a kind of Switzerland on the territory of the former USSR.

Visitors from Moscow were no less frequent. Vladimir Zhirinovsky "walked" at the birthday party of President Dudayev, and General Sterligov conducted "very confidential negotiations" with them, warning that soon, no later than the autumn of 1994, another coup d'état would take place in Moscow, President Yeltsin would be removed from power, arrested and, possibly, , publicly hanged (

what Khasbulatov rebels dreamed about aloud quite recently) and the new national government of Russia will solemnly confirm the independence of Ichkeria. In the meantime, the general asked for "a little money" to prepare the said coup. Dudayev was surprised that the "new national government" was going to start its vigorous activity to save Russia by confirming the complete independence of the breakaway autonomies, but he did not say anything and gave money. It is not appropriate for a Muslim who receives a guest in his house to embarrass him with unexpected questions and refuse requests. Guest in the house, Allah in the house.

And guests flocked from all over the CIS and from all over the world. Presidents and vice-presidents of powerful overseas oil monsters came incognito and, openly, influential people from the CIS countries and some subjects of the Russian Federation: such as presidents Shaimiev and Ilyumzhinov. In front of everyone on the territory of the former USSR, a new Switzerland was emerging. True, if we compare Chechnya with Switzerland, then it was the Switzerland of the time of William Tell, still very warlike and not very rich, but already with all the makings of that unique state formation that forced all European predators to reckon with its neutrality during the two world wars ...

False bank notes, offshore companies, the rapid movement of black capital through fictitious firms and banks in Moscow, Siberia, Cyprus, Istanbul, a super-free economic zone with a completely natural criminal connotation, because it doesn't happen otherwise, because unlike Switzerland, Chechnya was surrounded on all sides by a huge criminal zone called the Russian Federation.

Not without reason, even one of the fathers of "perestroika", Alexander Yakovlev, answering a correspondent's question about what, in his opinion, perestroika brought to the peoples of the former USSR, answered:

"We used to live in the political zone, now we live in the criminal zone." Perhaps there was some exaggeration in these words, but by no means a grotesque.

Numerous firms and banks involved in the sale of weapons, rare earth metals, oil and gas, almost without hesitation, were engaged in drug trafficking, because it was impossible to think of anything more profitable in a country with a collapsed economy, when you could quickly get a thousand dollars for an invested dollar - send this money, say, to the Kuban Bank of Nikolai Yegorov, buy 30 Grad installations and 50 infantry fighting vehicles in Chelyabinsk on them, send them to Chechnya, resell them to Kazakhstan, undertaking from it the obligation to supply its aluminum only through the company "TSS, registered in Monaco, but managed from Odessa by the most powerful international corporation Trans World Metal.

The events taking place on the territory of their "Lesotho" were watched with less and less pleasure from the Kremlin, experiencing a mixed feeling of envy and their own powerlessness to somehow influence these events. Moreover, these events took place against the backdrop of an ever-increasing offensive of militant Islamism, the waves of which were already sweeping over the Stavropol and Krasnodar Territories. The ongoing Afghan war, which had moved from the foothills of the Pamirs along the entire line of the former border of the Soviet Union, where Russian soldiers were bleeding, was also an alarming echo.

With even less pleasure and with much more envy, the events in Chechnya were followed from different capitals, which could well be called fraternal, if not for the specifics of interethnic relations that existed on the territory of the collapsed communist empire. In Kazan, President Shaimiev (former 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tatarstan), frankly, planned exactly for Tatarstan what was happening in Chechnya, but he did not have the free-adventurous flight of thought of General Dudayev, since Shaimiev was never a pilot, but as a professional party apparatchik, he did not dare to go into exacerbations with his old friends from the Central Committee of the CPSU, knowing their habits well from his own experience. So, asking yourself a perfectly reasonable question:

"Why is it possible for Chechnya, but not for Tatarstan?" President Shaimiev received an answer every time:

"Chechnya is as much an integral part of Russia as Tatarstan."

However, all such statements sounded more like an expression of the private opinion of those who expressed them, like Doku Zavgayev, who was expelled from Chechnya, than an expression of a firm state policy. And the same Shaimiev, who was invited to quietly and peacefully join the international oil and gas scams, the knot of which was tightening ever tighter in Grozny, sincerely could not understand why he, a member of the all-powerful caste of partocrats who started perestroika solely to strengthen their own power and wealth, you can't do what some rootless general can do, about whom no one knew for sure just three years ago. And although Shaimiev was also (albeit to a lesser extent) a Muslim, like Dudayev, and moreover, over the years he was honored to perform the Hajj to Mecca, together with the former 1st secretary of the Kemerovo regional committee of the CPSU Tuleyev, the president of Islam

he was afraid of sovereign Tatarstan no less than he was afraid of the units of the Russian army stationed on its sovereign territory. And therefore, he did not understand (and, perhaps, did not know) the obligations that General Dudayev assumed in exchange for all those privileges arising from his declaration of independence of the Republic of Ichkeria - to serve as the tip of Moscow's spear in the region.

After the victorious completion of operations in Abkhazia by the army of General Dudayev, there was no opportunity to show oneself in any other way, since the capture of Sukhumi by Shamil Basaev's detachments was a very substantive lesson for many (if not for all). Not only his natural allies in the so-called "Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus", but, it would seem, also natural opponents from among the resurgent Kuban, Terek and other Cossacks, who painfully and for a long time go through the stage of fake decorativeness, looked at Dudayev with lust. But everyone is well aware that mountain separatism cannot even be compared with Cossack separatism, which has been shaking Russia for almost its entire history since the time when there was not a single Christian soul beyond the Terek...

Soon, however, Moscow instructed General Dudayev to carry out yet another delicate task.

The situation on the ruins of the collapsed empire changed with every second, as in the final stage of the battle of Waterloo.

If we review all the losses of Moscow after the collapse of the Soviet Union, then, undoubtedly, the most painful loss should be recognized as the loss of control over Azerbaijani oil. It was all the more disappointing that the entire powerful petrochemical complex in Azerbaijan was raised from the zero cycle, created and deployed by Russia with a very modest participation of the local population, which, among other things, studied at Moscow's expense in oil universities. Therefore, when in 1990 the Soviet army stormed Baku in its nervous behavior, expressed in uncontrolled shooting at everything that moves, Moscow's anxiety was felt for its main wealth, on the basis of which all Moscow leaders from Stalin to Andropov hoped to get to the communist tomorrow.

The CPSU, which is near death, frantically trying to keep its untold wealth with its weakening hands (and brains), as a result, lost control over the situation almost everywhere, including, of course, Azerbaijan, where the Kremlin protege Mutalibov was overthrown and fled to Moscow.

The People's Front, led by the "freely elected president" Elchibey, came to power in Baku and immediately began to distance itself from Moscow, offering its untold oil wealth to energetic Western monopolies. This was already more than Moscow could bear, although one could get the impression that at that time she had business and

more important.

A coup d'etat immediately began to take shape in Azerbaijan. Self-proclaimed colonel Suret Husseinov, who in the old days was the director of a wool-spinning factory, and now commanded an army corps in Karabakh, was elected the head of the coup. And so brilliantly that he surrendered almost a third of the territory of his country to the poorly armed Armenian militias, which, as befits a true commander, Husseinov immediately accused the government of Elchibey.

One fine day, Suret Husseinov left his base in Ganja in the direction of Baku, which was more than 150 kilometers away. A jeep was driving ahead with Husseinov himself, followed by two old, battered sightseeing buses. The tank "T55" without guns closed the column. The column was heading to the capital of Azerbaijan to overthrow President Elchibey.

The government troops advanced towards the "rebels" were dispersed somewhere along the way. OMON and traffic cops let the convoy pass by, servilely taking under the visor. The windows of the bus sparkled with white-toothed smiles, especially dazzling against the background of black, neatly trimmed beards, the valiant soldiers of Shamil Basayev. They gently hugged their machine guns, and on their heads, unlike the memorable days of the battles for Abkhazia, ribbons turned green, making it clear to all the initiates that now they are warriors of Allah and do not advise anyone to mess with themselves. However, no one tried. President Elchibey was sent to his native Nakhichevan, and in his place from Nakhichevan came the legendary Heydar Aliyev, whom Moscow, for reasons known only to her, for some reason considered her own.

henchman.

Indeed, the former chief of the KGB of Azerbaijan, the former 1st secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Republic, a member of the powerful Kremlin Politburo, a favorite of Brezhnev and Andropov, whose protege could he be considered?

But no! The seventy-two-year-old veteran of the KGB and the Central Committee of the CPSU had absolutely no intention of following in line with Moscow politics, or even looking back at it. He boldly continues the work timidly begun by Elchibey, giving away the gigantic reserves of Azerbaijani oil to the sharks of imperialism, allocating 5% of future profits to Russia as a Caspian country.

The old Kremlin schemer instantly appreciated the advantages of his position. It was reliably covered from Russian troops by the Republic of General Dudayev, through whose territory the only highway Rostov-Baku and the corresponding railway line passed. The former Russian military Caspian flotilla had already been expelled from their bases in Baku and Kaspiysk by that time and dragged out a miserable existence in the Astrakhan region, posing no real danger to anyone.

The real danger for Aliyev was represented by two forces: Armenia from the west and Dudayev from the north. But the Armenians, having knocked out the Azerbaijani troops from the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, having captured the key cities of Aghdam and Shusha, were clearly not inclined to show excessive aggressiveness even under strong pressure from Moscow. In any case, they were completely uninterested in organizing another coup d'état in Baku. Georgia, mired in internecine strife, also mired in the Abkhazian crisis, which gave it about 300,000 refugees, was also not dangerous. Only Dudayev remained dangerous, because any unit of his army, having arrived in Azerbaijan, would not have met with serious resistance from the Azerbaijani army, demoralized by the Karabakh pogroms, if what was left of it could even be called an army.

But Dudayev was a brother in faith, and the old member of the Brezhnev Politburo Aliyev, for the same reasons as Dudayev, had already become a doubly Muslim by this time.

Aliyev and Dudayev met, having sworn on the Koran not to cause any harm to each other, but to turn all their forces against the northern ghouls in the name of Allah, the great and merciful.

After that, Azerbaijan became the territory through which Chechnya was connected with the outside world both by land and by sea. However, at that time, it was generally a sin for Dudayev to complain: he calmly used the ports of Abkhazia, and generally considered the oil terminal in Novorossiysk and the port in Tuapse "de facto" his property, although "de jure" they still belonged to Neftegazprom, which considers itself not less powerful than the Republic of Ichkeria.

In the meantime, in Moscow, making sure that they were again beaten with a thimble, they decided to overthrow Heydar Aliyev and put in his place the good old Mutalibov, who is hiding from his native justice in the capital. It was decided to carry out the coup again with the help of the false colonel Gusseinov with the support of the good fellows Shamil Basayev, who had,

as we have already seen, vast experience in carrying out such operations.

According to all the rules of the GRU special forces, the detachment gathered at one of its bases in the Shatoi region, dematerialized there and materialized in the presidential palace of Heydar Aliyev.

Aliyev, although he called Husseinov by the name of Suret, and he, dad, did not trust each other at all, although Aliyev made a self-proclaimed colonel in gratitude for the overthrow of Elchibey as the prime minister of the new government.

But being prime minister under a president like Aliyev meant very little. Something between a referent and a senior referent. Aliyev instructed his own son Said, who also called him dad, to head the oil complexes of the republic and receive income from oil. Therefore, Papa Aliyev was not at all surprised when he received a message from Grozny that they were going to overthrow him.

Basayev's fighters did not appear in Baku, the rebellion raised by the local riot police was quickly suppressed, Suret Husseinov fled to Russia, and Moscow, as they say, remained in its own interests.

The first real showdown with General Dudayev took place. When asked why his people did not provide an anti-Aliyev coup in Baku, Dudayev replied that the Koran forbids a Muslim to raise a hand against a Muslim. This has never happened and he does not want to be the first. This was said so confidently, as if Iran had not fought Iraq for 7 years before, and Iraq, in turn, had not put fraternal Kuwait to the sword and plunder.

Similar behavior by Dudayev, in which hypocrisy was side by side with a slight mockery, along with information obtained by intelligence that the Chechen leader swore by the beard of the Prophet not to give Russia the opportunity to stretch an oil pipeline from Azerbaijan through its territory (so that it would go through Turkey).

It was Moscow's desperate attempt to somehow get into the "International Oil Consortium" that Aliyev was putting together, which completely pissed everyone off in the Kremlin.

A very reasonable question followed:

Who is this Dudayev anyway? Didn't he think too much of himself? And what kind of independent Chechnya is this?

As always happens in these cases, the business partners of the Chechen general expressed their dissatisfaction most of all, rightly believing that he was charging them too large percentages for mediating their activities, both laborious and illegal. In particular, the already mentioned "Kuban Bank" in Cyprus, which was engaged in transferring Russian-Kazakh aluminum to the West with the help of false "Chechen" advice notes, [2] has already made preliminary calculations and found out how much its profit would increase if a less greedy and more accommodating intermediary. The ideal would be to plant in Grozny (as a governor, for example) Nikolai Yegorov himself with former Dudayev powers.

Even the president of sovereign Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev, meeting with President Yeltsin in the early summer of 1994, also expressed some bewilderment with a clear tinge of dissatisfaction about the fact that such a responsible post in Grozny was occupied by some kind of rootless general, while the legitimate contender for this post, Doku Zavgayev is forced to huddle in a small office in the backyard of the Yeltsin administration.

However, President Nazarbayev (former 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan)

in addition to the dynastic ones, there were other more mundane reasons to be dissatisfied with the impudent upstart from Grozny.

The fact is that Kazakhstan, having become a sovereign state, also "did not offend Russia", declaring the military space complex in Barnaul and, what is even more offensive, the Karaganda Mining and Metallurgical Combine as its property. This is a gigantic enterprise built on the bones of hundreds of thousands of prisoners of the Stalinist Karlag (

conc. almost the size of Europe), could almost single-handedly provide the whole world with raw ore and all kinds of metallurgical products. It must be said that it was this plant that became one of the main incentives for sovereignization for Nazarbayev, who dreamed of a comfortable life by selling various derivatives of hot and cold rolled products to the West.

However, these dreams soon dissipated, as it turned out that the purity of the production of the metallurgical products of the plant is extremely low, which was not the case in the West in the first half of the last century, and therefore the products on the Western market were completely uncompetitive. (

Also, by the way, like the Ukrainian grain, on which they dreamed of living by blackmailing Russia, independent activists in Kyiv.)

To save the situation in Kazakhstan, the former Minister of Metallurgy of the USSR, and now the head of the powerful Roschermet corporation, Oleg Soskovets, is urgently recalled from Moscow. In the old days, Soskovets, who was born and raised in Kazakhstan, was the director of the Karaganda plant, and Nazarbayev was his party organizer. In Alma-Ata, Soskovets, who arrived, receives the post of Minister of Industry of Kazakhstan in the rank of Deputy Prime Minister.

It was back in February 1992, when the huge plant was already on the verge of shutdown and radical measures were required to save it. Production at the plant, designed for the slave labor of prisoners from the time of the victorious march of still undeveloped socialism, was at the level of the Stone Age labor-intensive and extremely environmentally dirty, but, as it should be the cheapest in the world, since such money was spent on the wages of workers, which even I was embarrassed to speak out loud. And even those after January 1992 were not paid, making the world's most expensive production simply free.

Simultaneously with Soskovets, the vice-president of the already mentioned offshore company TSS Lisin appeared in Kazakhstan, who in the old Soviet times worked as Soskovets's deputy at a mining and smelting plant. Having enlisted the support of the two governments of the Russian and Kazakh, Lisin quickly financed production, achieving uninterrupted sales of products in exchange for government permission to cover the metallurgical giants of Siberia with their activities.

This was done in a ridiculously simple way: the money received on false advice [3] went through Grozny to a bank in Cyprus, where it was laundered, and then sent to Siberia and Karaganda. It is not known where products went from there, including hundreds of thousands of tons of scarce aluminum, turning into dollars, which, in turn, settled in Moscow, Alma-Ata, Grozny and in various exotic banks of the West.

The scale of the case was such that already in October 1992 Soskovets and Lisin moved back to Moscow, where the former, for a start, occupied his former and, at first glance, very modest post of chairman of the metallurgy committee.

The scope of ongoing operations is expanding every day, but the share of President Nazarbayev, on the contrary, is becoming smaller and steadily follows every month.

this trend. All this happens because a large percentage of the total profit settles in Grozny, and Dudayev is inclined to increase this very percentage even more.

In Moscow, they are perplexed: why does the general need so much money and where does he put it at all, since everything necessary for the population of the Republic of Ichkeria not to die of hunger, he traditionally; and receives it for free from Russia, from time to time paying her for it with insults and threats.

The bewilderment grows even stronger with the understanding that no Chechnya is now needed at all for laundering dirty and counterfeit money, since all the same with great effect and without paying anyone any intermediary and commission can already be done on the territory of Russia itself, where money laundering of international and own swindlers is not a criminally punishable act.

And everything would have been fine if the country had not been dominated by rampant democracy in the only area where it (democracy) is truly possible and effective in the press. The media have long been spinning stories with false advice, not really believing that this is a purely Chechen event, necessary solely to pay for General Dudayev's banquets. The unbridled mass media dragged along a number of investigators from the prosecutor's office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and even idealists from the Federal Grid Company, who, following in the footsteps of fakes, very quickly buried their noses in the walls of the ancient Kremlin and were surprised

stopped.

Oh, the good old days, when no one dared to utter a word, except at a closed meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU!

Nostalgia for these very times, however, was suppressed by the limitless possibilities that the present times provided, but created the illusion of a possible combination of the best of the two eras of the past and the present.

It cannot be said that they did not try to negotiate with Dudayev. Countless emissaries traveled to him, starting with Zhirinovsky, but the stubborn highlander stood his ground and even promised to raise interest rates, otherwise threatening to expose all his Moscow companions. Moscow responded by stepping up its anti-Dudaev and anti-Chechen campaign. Chechnya responded in kind. However, the business activity of the parties has not yet suffered from this, except for the fact that both sides are already bogged down in it, like in a quagmire.

Moscow in mid-1994 no longer looked like Moscow in 1991 or even 1993. Although very little time has passed since then, everyone has already forgotten those days when President Yeltsin and his faithful Korzhakov rode a trolleybus to work (or a Zhiguli bus) or stood on Vasilyevsky Spusk, roused the people to fight against Khasbulatov, who, in turn, he tried to carry out the "impeachment" of Boris Yeltsin through the Supreme Council. And the crowd of opponents of the President demanded his public execution or, at best, deportation to Israel.

It seemed that a whole geological epoch had passed since then. The President, if he appeared anywhere, it was only on a giant "membership" resembling a nuclear submarine put on wheels. His bodyguard, headed by General Korzhakov, who received this rank immediately after the major, approached 40 thousand specially trained officers, twice the famous guard of the Persian Shah Abass and 10 times the guard of Comrade Stalin. The president rarely appeared in public, and gloomy rumors roamed Moscow that the bodyguards had already subdued the head of state and that General Korzhakov now rules the country on behalf of the President.

The parliamentary chambers were still sitting, the press was still making noise, the electronic media were flooded with all topics, but some kind of gloomy shadow lay over the country,



in which multi-layer lawlessness reigned, the economy and the financial system were in complete chaos, and no one knew where and at what level government decisions were made.

After the collapse of the Soviet empire, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, the collapse of the state ideology, the aggressiveness accumulated over 70 years of the communist regime insistently demanded some way out. This terrible aggressive field, for decades (if not centuries) turned to the West, after the shameful collapse and complete collapse of the western front, having become even stronger, an enraged monster rushed around the country in search of a way out and application. By manipulating almost all the processes in the defeated and virtually uncontrollable country, the global geopolitical forces slowly, consistently and persistently turned the giant country with its front to the south, so that no one in Europe and America would ever again have a headache about tens of thousands of Russian tanks roaring with engines on the Elbe. .

This global reversal, fueled by the most unexpected sources (like Zhirinovsky's book "The Last Throw to the South"), by the cannonade constantly coming from the Tajik border and from various Caucasian fronts, intensified by anti-Caucasian propaganda and many other factors, including the sad fate of the one who was cut off from Russia and the Black Sea Fleet, gradually turning into scrap metal, indicated the direction and vector of unsatisfied activity.

And a series of very strange terrorist acts periodically taking place at the Mineralnye Vody airport, where Chechens seized buses with hostages, inflamed public opinion to the limit in a thirst for retribution. Whether these Chechen terrorists were ordinary criminals recruited by the FSK (as Dudayev's sources assured) or agents of Dudayev's security service, as government sources in Moscow constantly hinted at, is not so important. They did their job by strengthening the vector of Russian aggressiveness in a southerly direction and dangerously moving it to the oncoming vector of the Chechen

hate.

All the above events, intertwined into a single ball, by the middle of the summer of 1994 led everyone in the Kremlin to the unanimous opinion that the regime of General Dudayev in Chechnya should be ended.

Such a formulation of the question was the point of view of even not so aggressive politicians, since aggressive politicians were inclined to think that it was necessary to end not with the regime of General Dudayev, but with Chechnya in general, since a new Dudayev would inevitably appear even smarter and more cunning than the current one.

Fortunately, in mid-May 1994, when this issue was first seriously put on the agenda of the Security Council under the President of Russia, the absolutely unconstitutional body of personal power of Boris Yeltsin, no one seriously thought about war.

The possibility of a personal meeting between Boris Yeltsin and General Dzhokhar Dudayev was discussed.

Many understood that Russia, already in a pre-infarction state by all indicators, if anything was missing now, was to unleash a war somewhere. Especially in their own territory.

Therefore, it was considered the most reasonable solution to unleash a civil war on the territory of Chechnya itself, providing moral, financial and, if possible (precisely if possible!) Military assistance to the anti-Dudayev forces. Of course, this meant assistance with weapons and ammunition.

But only.

But the almighty Rock was already drawing the unfortunate country towards its fate.

Avoiding unnecessary details, one can only note that it was at this time that Ruslan Khasbulatov reappeared at the back of the political scene. Released from prison under the so-called Duma Amnesty and warned that he would immediately return to jail if he decides to go into politics, Khasbulatov languished in his old professorial chair, deprived of power, special communications, privileges and much more to which he managed to get used, declaring himself "the head of representative power." The professorial position, from which he once got into the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, seemed to him quite rightly miserable and insignificant. He tried to have fun writing, as it seemed to him, unprecedentedly sophisticated books, but he quickly got bored, because, in the words of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, "all the juices of his brain" worked to regain their former position and power. The thought that he had been so rudely thrown down when he had only half an inch left to the very pinnacle of power, when he was already sending a crowd roaring with delight and fury to storm the Kremlin, burned the heart of the ex-speaker, feverishly looking for ways and possibilities for a new ascent to "yawning heights".

The situation itself suggested to Khasbulatov the simplest and shortest, in his opinion, path to at least a partial restoration of its former greatness. This path, of course, again lay through Chechnya.

To do this, it was enough to overthrow General Dudayev, which seemed to Khasbulatov not a very difficult matter, since he actually put Dudayev in this place himself. Then declare himself either president or chairman of the Supreme Council of Chechnya dispersed by Dudaev, confirming complete loyalty to Moscow, which automatically opened Khasbulatov's road to the Federation Council, the Upper House of the Russian Parliament. And there it was possible to shove the cunning but not very smart speaker Shumeiko from his chair, subordinate the chamber to his will and start everything, as they say, in the second round.

Knowing how much the Kremlin is currently concerned about the situation in Chechnya, Khasbulatov, through his remaining connections in the highest corridors of Russian power, modestly offered his services, attaching a not very intricate plan of upcoming actions.

He, Khasbulatov, using his authority as the "generally recognized leader in Chechnya", provokes an uprising of the Chechen people against the dictatorial regime of General Dudayev, overthrows him, installs a pro-Moscow government in Chechnya, at the head of which he joins the glorious march of the new Russia to its future greatness.

In fairness, it should be noted that there were ten such clever people in the Kremlin as Khasbulatov in each office. The method of getting out of the Chechen crisis proposed by the former speaker, the author of which for some reason he considered himself, was nothing more than a plagiarism, shamelessly copied from the classics of practical communism Lenin and Stalin, who successfully used this method long before the birth of Ruslan Khasbulatov. And since the speaker and the Kremlin leadership went through the same political school, they knew this technique very well, which was repeatedly used from the war with Finland in 1939 to the war with Afghanistan in 1979 and without Khasbulatov.

Moreover, the very name of Khasbulatov caused everyone in the Kremlin, including, first of all, the President himself, to nervously twitch his lips and eyebrows. Boris Yeltsin, for example, generally did not tolerate in his presence the name of a former comrade-in-arms in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR in any context. When, after the arrest of Khasbulatov in October 1993. As a trophy, the president was given the famous speaker's smoking pipe, with which Khasbulatov tried to create an image that even remotely resembled Comrade Stalin, Boris Yeltsin slammed this pipe against the wall of his office and laughed joyfully when he saw how it shattered into pieces.

However, in politics, as Pitt wisely remarked, there are no eternal friends, much less eternal enemies. It all depends on current interests. The Kremlin has already begun to act according to the famous method, the authorship of which the ex-speaker tried to attribute to himself. The so-called Chechen Government of National Salvation was already created, headed by Avturkhanov and Khadzhiyev, taken out of the Kremlin naphthalene, who could not even be called adventurers, they were so pathetic and ridiculous dumb puppets, completely unsuitable for those deadly games where they were supposed to use.

To help them, they were given the armed formations of two outright criminals: Labozanov and Gantemirov, who were once expelled from Chechnya by Dudaev for their addiction to armed robberies and bribes. Their combat units, as undisciplined and violent as their leaders, were absolutely nothing from a military point of view, only able to terrorize the local population. The Kremlin had no one else to bet on in Chechnya.

And although by this time the authority of General Dudayev, who, in the wake of all previous turbulent events, still did not have time to take care of the internal affairs of his republic, had faded somewhat among a certain part of the population, the newcomers from Moscow, who settled in the Nadterechny region, did not arouse any enthusiasm among the Chechens.

And the timid raids of the Labozanov-Gantemirov detachments across the Terek, due to the insignificance of their results, could only cause irritation in Grozny than any serious fear. Although Dudayev, no doubt, understood that Moscow, as usual, clumsily and clumsily, began to move from words to deeds.

Several skirmishes between Labozanov's detachments and General Dudayev's units, however, gave Ruslan Khasbulatov the opportunity to declare himself a peacemaker and, as such, go to Chechnya in order to find out the situation first-hand and report it to the Kremlin, where he was not yet allowed.

Returning to Moscow, Khasbulatov was received by the head of the presidential administration, Filatov, and the head of the presidential guard, General Korzhakov. Both were old and good friends of the former speaker. Filatov began as one of Khasbulatov's deputies, and he also met Korzhakov more than once during the "honey" days of his serpentine maturation on President Yeltsin's chest.

Khasbulatov's report breathed frank optimism: Dudayev's regime is going through a deep crisis. The general actually controls nothing and no one outside his palace in the center of Grozny. The elders and the army are unhappy with him. Even the poorly armed and even worse trained detachments of Labozanov and Gantemirov

(both have already been promoted to colonels of the Russian army) Dudayev's illegal formations are not able to give a worthy rebuff. If the Kremlin agrees to put at the disposal of the opposition (as the gang roughly knocked together by Moscow was officially called) a dozen and a half tanks (of course, with crews), about the same number of armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, as well as a link of aircraft and fire support helicopters, then by the end of November from the Dudayev regime one memory remains.

Khasbulatov's data almost completely coincided with the reports submitted to the Kremlin by the Federal Counterintelligence Service and the Main Intelligence Directorate, and therefore, having overcome dislike for Khasbulatov, they decided to agree with his arguments. In the end, it's never too late to swat him like a fly too. Let him drag chestnuts from fire.

From that moment on, very strange expressions like

"opposition tanks", "opposition aircraft", sometimes called "aircraft of unknown origin" and the same fire support helicopters. Planes made raids on Grozny, for some reason constantly wanting to hit the National Bank of the Republic of Ichkeria and its Ministry of Finance with incendiary bombs and rockets. Every time after that, the Russian Ministry of Defense made oath statements to the whole world that it did not know where the "Dudaev opposition" got planes and helicopters from, but they had nothing to do with the Russian air force.

Such statements were made both personally by the Minister of Defense Grachev and the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force Deineko, not to mention smaller officials. To the question of some correspondent "where did the Chechen opposition get its own aviation?" General Grachev, with his characteristic soldierly simplicity, answered:

"How do I know".

Meanwhile, on November 24, Khasbulatov, who had dug in in the village of Tolstoy-Yurt, received a report that everything was ready for the assault on Grozny and the overthrow of the Dudayev regime.

And already on the evening of November 25, all the Russian media broadcast the long-awaited message that the tanks of the "opposition", after a short artillery preparation, broke into Grozny and came close to the presidential palace. The offensive of the opposition was supported by "pinpoint" strikes by "opposition aviation". The cameramen stationed in Grozny showed the building of the National Bank on fire, while noting that "the whereabouts of General Dudayev is unknown," because the presidential palace captured by Labozanov's detachment is empty. This was confirmed by Avturkhanov, speaking on television 60 kilometers north of Grozny.

Everyone in the Kremlin breathed a sigh of relief, and Soskovets, who by this time had become Deputy Prime Minister, flew to Japan the next day on matters of national importance. Before leaving, he learned from the assistant that Dudayev, judging by the latest FSK reports, had apparently been killed.

Throughout the day, the media broadcast all sorts of nonsense, such as the plight of the Moscow Ballet on Ice, stuck in the United States due to lack of money for tickets, the burned-out "Khopra" with its Krasnodar tea, the resumption of monastic life in the Novodevichy Convent, etc. On TV screens Deputy Marychev showed a porn magazine at a meeting of the Duma, which depicted Vladimir Zhirinovskiy putting his famous cap on a naked girl. Marychev argued that it was a photo montage and got the deputies of all factions to rush to buy it, since all the Duma kiosks were filled with this magazine.

And only at the end of the day came a message about the complete defeat of the forces of the "opposition", for some reason reported to Moscow about their brilliant victory. 14 Russian tanks burned out on the streets of Grozny, and 70 Russian servicemen were captured by Dudayev. So that no one would have "doubts about this, captured Russian officers and soldiers were shown on TV. They were immediately recognized by their wives and mothers, who rushed to the Duma to seek the truth from the Minister of Defense, General Grachev, and caught him in some corridors of a government building.

The general was, as always, cheerful. His lips curled into the condescending smirk of a professional forced to comment on the miserable work of amateurs. Completely denying that those who were taken prisoner have anything to do with the Russian army, the Minister of Defense admitted that in general he was "little interested in" these events. I saw something on TV and nothing more.

Everything is terribly unprofessional. Who, what a fool, excuse me, brings tanks into the city? "Yes, I," continued the general, would put things in order there

in two hours with one airborne regiment."

Meanwhile, General Dudayev told representatives of almost all the country's news agencies who had flocked to Grozny that if Russia did not recognize the officers and soldiers in his captivity as its servicemen within 72 hours, then they would all be shot. Peacemaker Khasbulatov added confusion to the situation, calling for the evacuation of all children from Grozny, since the city would be subjected to a massive air strike today.

President Yeltsin was already in a bad mood that day because of the failure of another coup attempt in Baku. There were mass arrests of suspects, and Suret Husseinov went on the run.

Since the FSK was entrusted with recruiting officers and soldiers for the Chechen "opposition", the head of counterintelligence Sergei Stepashin was immediately summoned to the Kremlin. At that moment, Stepashin was busy with a very important matter. He sued Zhirinovskiy, who publicly accused the director of the FSK of being a paid agent for the American CIA and the Israeli Mossad service. Submitting a statement of claim to the Sokolnichiy District Court of Moscow, the chief of counterintelligence demanded 300 million rubles as compensation for his offended "honor and dignity".

Arriving at the President and learning about the sensational news that came from Grozny, Stepashin did not find anything better than to say that his people, who recruited officers and soldiers in the units near Moscow (so as not to travel too far for the sake of economy), took from everyone an obligation that those under no circumstances will they surrender, and if they fall into the hands of the Dudayevites, say, in an unconscious state, then, of course, they will not say a word.

The head of the Federal Grid Company emphasized that everyone without hesitation signed such an obligation in exchange for 2 million rubles, since the units had not been paid salaries for 3 months and they had nothing to feed their families. If one of them violated the subscription, then, according to the current legislation, they will be held accountable, including criminal ...

The president did not take such legal frills well. Having scolded in the hearts of his old friend Khasbulatov, who, as he now understood, cannot be trusted even with the simplest things, Yeltsin ordered, in order to save face against the backdrop of a growing scandal, to present Dudayev with an official ultimatum. The text of the ultimatum was drawn up immediately.

It said that under fear of introducing a state of emergency and the measures arising from this situation, General Dudayev was invited to cease fire within 48 hours, release all prisoners and disband his illegal armed groups.

For greater importance, the President demanded that a draft decree be drawn up on the call for active military service of several categories of reserve officers. At the end of the meeting, they decided that Khasbulatov, who turned out to be a "blather", was to blame for everything. However, the President assured those present, he always knew about this even when he nominated Khasbulatov for his position as chairman of the Supreme Council.

"

The time has come, - the President remarked thoughtfully, -

take this matter seriously." By his order, a draft secret decree has been prepared, which he intends to sign tomorrow, November 30, and discuss some details today. All readily agreed.

According to the Constitution, which the President himself was the guarantor of, he had no right to issue any secret orders. No decree had legal force before its publication. But who ever in Russia attached importance to such procedural trifles? Russia is a great country and should solve its own problems, and not trust them to various adventurers like Ruslan Khasbulatov. Moreover, after yesterday's pogrom in Grozny, nothing was known about the whereabouts of the peacekeeper Khasbulatov himself.

Nevertheless, as peacekeeper Khasbulatov promised, at about 3:10 pm local time, six SU27-type attack aircraft appeared over Grozny and began bombing the city center, where the bank and the Ministry of Finance were located.

Dudayev was giving an interview to the BBC correspondent just at that moment. The British were very interested in the question, how is President Dudayev going to react to President Yeltsin's ultimatum?

Before the general had time to answer, explosions of bombs and rockets thundered over Grozny. "

This is just a warning, - Dudayev grinned, - Believe my word, A NEW CAUCASUS WAR WILL START SOON.

A little later in Moscow, the press secretary of President Yeltsin, Vyacheslav Kostikov, having gathered correspondents at a briefing, said that the planes that bombed Grozny "were not Russian." "And whose were they? journalists wondered.

American?"

The lie, hastily dressing in camouflage, was already marching across the country. At this time, Mikhail Gorbachev reminded himself, whose fund issued a special statement calling for direct negotiations with Dudayev and the rejection of a forceful solution to the problem.

"How can we," asked the former president of the USSR, "

be considered peacekeepers somewhere in the world if we cannot do without war at home.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner for Human Rights under the President of Russia, the famous dissident in the past, Sergei Kovalev, fought with all his might to organize direct negotiations between Yeltsin and Dudayev, believing that only such negotiations could solve the problem of Russian-Chechen relations. Kovalyov had no contact with the President, acting through Yeltsin's security aide, Yuri Baturin.

The idea of such a meeting has been in the air since the beginning of this summer, but it could not be organized. Yeltsin's chief of staff, Boris Filatov, said with a sigh:

Well, again, in an unflattering way, Dudayev spoke about our president. Boris Nikolaevich was very offended. The meeting therefore cannot take place. Boris Nikolaevich is beside himself.

By that time, the Yeltsin administration was already in such a state of order, established by the head of the presidential security service, General Korzhakov, that no one dared to repeat aloud the "unflattering comments" with which the President of Chechnya pissed off the President of Russia. The offices of all administration workers were tapped with the help of some cunning American bugs, and all kinds of twitchy and nervous advisers, assistants, consultants and referents even communicated with each other using notes that were immediately burned, like in spy films of the mid-30s.

Much later it became known that Dudayev allegedly reproached the Russian President for excessive drinking, expressing doubt that he was even capable of negotiating with anyone, because he had already drunk himself to the point of losing an adequate perception of reality. All Russia and all

The world, laughing, discussed the famous episode when the President of Russia allegedly drank himself to such a state that he could not get off the plane to meet with the Prime Minister of Iceland. This was done for him by our old friend Soskovets. Whether it was so or not is hard to say. Highlanders, and especially Chechens, are exceptionally polite and delicate people. It is unlikely that General Dudayev could afford such rudeness. Moreover, the first one was interested in such a meeting.

It is possible that the "unflattering remarks" were fabricated by one of the numerous analytical centers under the wing of General Korzhakov, who just wanted to resolve the issue by force, since, being a convinced statesman, he sincerely believed that only a small victorious war (even if on its own territory and against its own people) can only improve Russia's rather faded image as a great power, and at the same time raise the rating of President Yeltsin, which is tending to zero. This was important because it was not yet known whether or not another presidential election in 1996 could be avoided.

And the year 1994 was already coming to an end, and time was flying almost at the speed of light.

However, General Korzhakov's plans were much broader and framed in another "analytical" note, which he intended to present to the President in the near future.

If someone then told General Korzhakov that he was just a conductor of a policy developed not in Russia to turn the country "front to the south", he probably would not even understand what was at stake.

This is our security service. Apparently, it is all aimed at punishing everyone "for unflattering remarks" (or, as they used to say, "for obscene speeches") addressed to the head of state. And he doesn't see anything anymore. Or maybe Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is really right, almost every day throwing tantrums in the State Duma about the fact that our entire security service, along with its numerous analytical and research centers, is full of CIA and Massada agents? Be that as it may, but the day of November 30, 1994 began with a raid by "non-Russian" attack aircraft on Grozny airport, where Dudayev's personal airliner and several training aircraft belonging to the Ichkerian air force were stationed. Aircraft were damaged or destroyed.

"I congratulate you and the Russian Air Force on achieving air supremacy in the skies of Ichkeria. Let's meet on the ground," Dudayev telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Force, Colonel-General Deineken. The Commander-in-Chief immediately called a press conference, at which he expressed bewilderment about Dudayev's next antics. "Not a single Russian aircraft, the general confirmed with the word of an officer, is involved in the events in Chechnya." Nervous laughter already reigned in journalistic circles. So whose planes, bombing Russian territory, feel so at ease in the skies of Russia. After all, Chechnya is part of Russia. Where are the vaunted air defense service and the President looking?

As for President Yeltsin, he was looking through the text of his secret decree on the restoration of "constitutional legality in Chechnya." A meeting of the Security Council was to be held in a few hours, at which it was supposed to hear an analytical note prepared by General Korzhakov, as well as the Minister of Defense, the director of the counterintelligence service, the director of the foreign intelligence service, the minister of nationalities and a number of other responsible leaders.

The Kremlin no longer noticed that they were talking about Chechnya in terms of a foreign state against which aggression was being prepared.



The meeting of the Security Council was postponed due to disputes over whether or not to invite the "speakers" of the chambers: Rybkin and Shumeiko, who were distinguished by extreme talkativeness. It was decided not to invite them yet, but to inform them a little later without prior notice.

And behind the Kremlin walls, the democratic press and electronic media are raging.

"No man's prisoners of no man's country!" screaming newspaper headlines.

"Russia once again betrayed its soldiers!" On the TV screens are the gloomy, stubble-covered faces of Russian servicemen, willingly testifying to anyone. Ranks, surnames, numbers of military units, names of recruiters, payment details are pouring in. There is a major failure of another operation carried out jointly by the army and the FSK.

Sergei Yushenkov, chairman of the Duma Defense Committee, announced that tomorrow he was going to fly to Grozny with a group of deputies in an attempt to save at least part of the Russian soldiers from the promised execution.

And in Grozny, the military green flag of the Republic of Ichkeria, decorated with a grinning wolf's head, flutters over the presidential palace.[4]

At the walls of the palace with a naked saber in his hand, the white-bearded descendant of Sheikh Mansur enters in a warlike dance:

"Victory or death, may Allah hear us! Victory or death, may Allah help us!"

Old men in hats and Circassians are dancing, some with a saber, some with a stick. The crowd in the square is chanting:

"Ghazavat! Ghazavat! Ghazavat!" Arriving from. Afghan theologian scientist Khabibullah is a veteran of the war against the Soviet army with a brand new light machine gun around his neck and a Koran in his hands.

"The duty of every true believer," he exclaims, as if standing not in the corridor, but on the minaret, is to kill the infidels! For, as the great Abu al Maudi said, "

Faith is tested in Jihad."

Dudayev himself confers with his chief of staff, Maskhadov, a former colonel in the Soviet army who, like Dudayev, served in the Baltics. Strategy cards are spread out on the presidential office table. Dudaev in an elegant cap and camouflage jacket, from under which a snow-white shirt with a tie is visible. Less elegant Maskhadov in a national lamb hat and combat overalls. A hand with a pencil slides over the map.

According to intelligence, the war has already been decided by Moscow. One after another, heavy transport aircraft with troops land at the airfields of the Stavropol Territory and in Mozdok. Armored columns are moving towards the borders of Ichkeria. It is unlikely that this whole demonstration, which requires huge funds, was conceived only for the sake of intimidation, so that we become more compliant. The invasion will take place within the next month. When we find out for sure from our sources surrounded by General Grachev. The invasion can come from three directions and, most likely, will happen from three directions at once: from the Nadterechny region, from Ingushetia and from the territory of Dagestan. Apparently, the main goal will be to capture and hold the strategic highway Rostov-Baku and some key settlements along this route, such as Samashki and Chechen-Aul. With the simultaneous blocking of Grozny. "Or his assault?" Dudayev suggested. Maskhadov shook his head doubtfully. General Grachev is

All the same, Labozanov is not an idiot. He will not throw his tanks into a big city with almost half a million people, the vast majority of which are Russians. If Moscow is making another attempt to declare itself as a great power by destroying the Chechen people, then logic itself should prompt them to provide increased care and attention to the Russian population of the republic, concentrated mainly in Grozny and Gudermes.

Thus, there is a very interesting tactical scheme. If the Russian troops act within the framework of the optimal strategy, then, making their way along the Rostov-Baku highway and blocking Grozny, they automatically fall into a double encirclement and can be isolated from each other with subsequent destruction.

In theory, everything looked quite logical. Neither Dudayev nor Maskhadov imagined that the Russian troops, having fallen into all the traps set for them, would begin to use on their own territory, which they consider Chechnya, all the means of mass destruction (still except for nuclear weapons) that Russia was saving up for a future war with the United States and their allies in the struggle for world domination, trying to mask the depressing mediocrity of their generals and the complete lack of combat training among the soldiers with seas of blood.

And this meant that they did not know well their potential enemy, with whom they were going to fight.

The population of Chechnya, unlike their president, obeying exclusively their own historical memory or, in modern terms, "gene information", did not at all share the optimism that reigned in the Dudayev Palace. From the moment when, in the second half of the 18th century, the first

"Guide to the extermination of the Chechens", the population knew well what awaited them in the event of another invasion of Russian troops. And the "pinpoint" bombing of Grozny by mysterious "opposition" planes that began showed that their worst were being confirmed concerns.

Neither General Yermolov, nor General Baryatinsky, nor even Comrade Stalin's special troops of the NKVD had aviation. The flow of refugees poured into Ingushetia, Dagestan and North Ossetia. The Chechen population of Grozny was evacuated to relatives in the countryside. In Chechnya, all relatives and ties of kinship are revered there and almost elevated to a cult.

But the 200,000 (according to the most conservative estimates) Russian population of Grozny had nowhere to run. Humiliated and humiliated by the three years of Dudayev's rule and their own incomprehensibly suspended status, fueled by rumors spread by Moscow about the imminent massacre and (or) mass eviction, the Russian population decided to wait for the arrival of their native army, not moving from their place and in their hearts even rejoicing that the end of Dudayev's regime.

At 18.00 "opposition planes" struck again at Grozny airport, destroying the runway with concrete-piercing bombs.

The aircraft were subjected to intense anti-aircraft fire. Air raid sirens howled. They were howled by the sirens of ambulances, carrying the first civilians crippled by Russian bombs to hospitals. The wounded residents of Grozny lay in the same wards with captured Russian soldiers, amazed at the incompetent execution of Khasbulat's brilliant plan. Russian residents, Russian soldiers, Russian bombs. Only the surgeons were Chechens.

One of the planes was shot down and in the roar of a fiery whirlwind fell somewhere in the suburban area of Chernorechye. The pilot is dead. Perhaps he remained faithful to the subscription, lying in one of the safes in the Lubyanka.

The meeting of the Security Council scheduled for Moscow was again postponed. The President gathered only a narrow circle of interested persons, thirsting for war and blood. In addition to the faithful Korzhakov, there were: Deputy Prime Ministers Soskovets and Yegorov, Defense Minister Grachev, Interior Minister Erin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev.

They decided to hear the latter in the first place, because, on the instructions of the President, he carefully probed the reaction of Western countries to the proposed actions in Chechnya, which were diplomatically called measures "to restore constitutional order and disarmament of illegal armed formations. According to Kozyrev, none of the so-called "big seven" even raised an eyebrow. Everyone agreed that the planned event is an exclusively internal affair of Russia. Only the stubborn French and impudent English, who always need more than others, mumbled something about human rights and asked them not to violate them if possible, to which Kozyrev readily

agreed.

The minister spoke inconsistently, swallowing the endings of words and constantly throwing frightened glances at the president and "making eyes" at General Korzhakov, who, of course, looked through the text of his speech in advance.

The President was sitting heavily sunk in an armchair, on the back of which a two-headed eagle was depicted in relief in gold. As on the throne of the sovereigns of Moscow. His eyes were half-closed with swollen eyelids, and his lower lip, moving forward, sagged slightly, which was a sure sign that the President had fallen ill again. Therefore, officially today the Security Council decided not to convene, but to postpone it until tomorrow in the hope that, having taken a steam bath in a bathhouse. The President, with God's help, will overcome the illness and solve a lot of accumulated issues.

In the meantime, they slipped him a pre-prepared decree on the appointment of Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov as the plenipotentiary representative of the President of the Russian Federation in Chechnya for signature. And they put their favorite "Parker" in their hands.

The President glanced at General Korzhakov. He silently nodded. The President exhaled noisily the air accumulated in his lungs and signed. The dream of "Kuban Bank" came true! Nikolai Yegorov was appointed to Grozny to the "bread" place of General Dudayev. Soskovets and Grachev were the first to bring their congratulations to the Minister of Nationalities. Yerin was much less happy, knowing full well that he, as the Minister of the Interior, would ultimately have to answer for everything and everyone.

As for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, by that time he had already left the conference, the subject of which concerned him only indirectly. After all, it was about the internal affairs of Russia.

His intelligent nature and democratic views were always disgusted by the rude and conservative-minded environment of the first President of Free Russia.

## Chapter 2

"Secret!

DECREE

PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

"On measures to restore constitutional legality and law and order on the territory of the Chechen Republic."

In connection with the continuation of the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic, non-compliance with the requirements for a ceasefire, the surrender of weapons, the dissolution of armed formations, the release of all captured and forcibly held citizens, the death of the civilian population and in accordance with Article 88 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Law of the RSFSR "On the state of emergency" and the Law of the Russian Federation "On Security" I decide:

1. From 06:00 on December 1, 1994, carry out measures to restore constitutional legality and law and order in the Chechen Republic in accordance with the attached plan.

2. Establish a Group for the management of actions to disarm and liquidate armed formations, the introduction and maintenance of a state of emergency on the territory of the Chechen Republic (hereinafter referred to as the Group) with the following composition:

GRACHEV PS Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation (Head).

EGOROV N. D. Minister of the Russian Federation for Nationalities and Regional  
politics.

KRUGLOV AS Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation.

ERIN VF Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

A. S. KULIKOV Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

NIKOLAEV A. I. Commander-in-Chief of the Border Troops of the Russian Federation.

PANICHEV VN Deputy Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation Chief Military Prosecutor.

B. N. PASTUKHOV Deputy Minister

Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

STAROVOYTOV AV Director General of the Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information under the President of the Russian Federation.

STEPASHIN SV Director of the Federal Counterintelligence Service of the Russian Federation.

P. P. SHIRSHOV Chairman of the Committee on Security and Defense of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly (as agreed).

Yushenkov SN Chairman of the Defense Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly (as agreed).

3. Grant the head of the Group, Grachev P. S., the authority to coordinate the activities of the federal executive authorities and security forces in the implementation of the action plan to restore constitutional law and order in the Chechen Republic, to bring, if necessary, to responsibility of officials participating in these events, up to their removal from the performance of official duties, as well as the use of funds and resources aimed at solving problems of restoring constitutional law and order in the Chechen Republic.

Establish that the instructions and orders of the head of the Group P.S. officials participating in the implementation of the action plan for the restoration of constitutional legality and law and order in the Chechen Republic.

4. Entrust the Group with the following main tasks:

ensuring the cessation of armed clashes, disarmament and liquidation of armed formations on the territory of the Chechen Republic.

organization of actions for the release of captured and forcibly held citizens.

organizing the establishment of a special regime for entry and exit, as well as a special procedure for movement in a state of emergency zone.

ensuring, if necessary, the operation of special forms of management on the territory of the Chechen Republic.

creation of conditions for the restoration of law and order in the Chechen Republic.

organization of negotiations on the settlement of the armed conflict on the territory of the Chechen Republic by peaceful means.

development of proposals for the organization of foreign policy and information support for the normalization of the situation in the Chechen Republic, as well as for the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to the population.

5. This Decree comes into force from the moment of its signing.

President of Russian Federation

B. YELTSIN.

Moscow, Kremlin November 30, 1994.

DECREE

PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

"On measures to curb the activities

illegal armed groups

on the territory of the Chechen Republic

and in the zone of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict".

The Security Council of the Russian Federation stated the presence of illegal armed formations, whose activities for a long time cause

bloodshed, claims lives and violates the rights of citizens of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic and some regions of the North Caucasus of the Russian Federation ...

Based on Article 80 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation p\_o\_s\_t\_a\_n\_o\_v\_l\_ya\_yu:

1. Instruct the Government of the Russian Federation, in accordance with paragraphs "e" and "e" of Article 114 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, to use all the means available to the state to ensure state security, legality, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the protection of public order, the fight against crime, the disarmament of all illegal formations.

2. This Decree shall enter into force on the day of its publication.

President of Russian Federation

B. YELTSIN

Moscow Kremlin. December 20, 1994.

"... Dzhokhar Dudayev proclaimed and began to persistently implement the idea of Chechnya's secession from the Russian Federation. Despite the fact that no country in the world recognized the Dudayev regime and the independence of the Chechen Republic proclaimed by him, he and his entourage continued to stubbornly follow the chosen course. Under these conditions, the only way to restore constitutional order in the Chechen Republic was to disarm the gangs...

It was impossible to do this with the forces of the police and internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who did not have heavy equipment in service. The Dudayev formations refused to voluntarily surrender their weapons. The amnesty announced by the federal authorities did not reach its goal either. There was a need to bring units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation into the territory of Chechnya.

From an appeal to the personnel of the Armed Forces.

December 10, 1994

"The most important component of the events in the Chechen Republic is the tragic fate of the Chechens. In the last century, a cruel, more than half a century Caucasian war with its huge human losses, and then the exodus to Turkey and the Middle East. In the current total deportation to Northern Kazakhstan in 1944, all this could not but leave deep scars in the memory of the people and give rise to deep distrust not only in the central government, but in the government in general.

S. Shakhrai, September 27, 1994".

"... With the revolution of 1917, the war in the Caucasus flared up with renewed vigor. In March 1920 on



In the North Caucasus, Soviet power was established, from which the highlanders expected an improvement in life. However, instead of individual robberies periodically carried out by the Russian army, they received a well-organized state robbery.

The first uprising broke out in Chechnya and Dagestan as early as September 1920. It was suppressed only in May 1921, when the main forces of the rebels were defeated and the flow of aid to them from Georgia stopped. Despite the suppression of the uprising, the Chechen population still had a lot of weapons in their hands, which they often used during constant attacks on the garrisons and posts of the Red Army. July 31, 1925

The Revolutionary Military Council of the North Caucasian Military District decided: "To carry out the disarmament of mountainous Chechnya and its most dangerous regions." About 7,000 people were involved in the operation with 24 guns, 240 machine guns and 7 aircraft.

The report on the operation stated: "Chechnya is disarmed. 23,044 rifles, 4,300 revolvers, and a large number of cartridges were confiscated. The entire head of the counter-revolutionary underground: Gotsinsky, Sheikh Ansaltinsky, Atabi Shamiev and others, was captured along with three hundred criminals and petty counter-revolutionaries. 120 houses have been burned.

According to the collectivization plans, the national autonomies of the North Caucasus were to undergo this measure in 1932-33. The response of the local population was swift: a new uprising broke out in Chechnya. Residents of the village of Urus-Martan wrote to the authorities: "In Urus-Martan, they took away all the bread from us and announced that until we hand over the bread, the authorities are closing the mosque. Those who do not have bread are deprived of their livestock; those who have no livestock are deprived of their clothes. It is better to die in the mountains with weapons in hand than to be without trousers in the GPU.

The uprising began on March 23, 1932. Already on March 27, units of the 28th Infantry Division advanced to the Grozny region, and the next day they entered the battle. By April 5, the uprising was crushed. The report of the district headquarters noted the exceptionally fierce resistance of the rebels: attacks in which even women participated, attacking in close formation with religious hymns.

With the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the rebel movement flared up again. To combat the insurgent movement, special units of the internal troops of the NKVD were formed. "In early October 1941, according to an official document, an armed uprising was raised by German fascist agents on the territory of several regions of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, as a result of which most of the collective farms and village councils were defeated." From October 30 to November 5, NKVD units, in cooperation with units of the Red Army, defeated the bandits, seizing 78 rifles and 3 machine guns, losing 5 people killed and 8 wounded.

In the summer of 1942, another uprising broke out, first in the Sharoevsky and then in the Itum-Kalinsky districts. The rebels managed to capture the regional centers of Khimoy, Shatoy, and then Itum-Kale. On August 20, the 141st regiment of the NKVD drove the rebels out of Shatoi. The approach of German troops to this area (the Germans took Mozdok and moved to Vladikavkaz) stimulated an even greater scope of the uprising, which almost led to the collapse of the Red Army front in this direction.

After the withdrawal of the Wehrmacht from the North Caucasus, most of the rebels left with them. The rest, after two months of fierce fighting with units of the Red Army and the NKVD troops, were dispersed in the mountains. The battles were fought with the use of artillery and aviation. More than 40 auls were wiped off the face of the earth, 3830 residential buildings and outbuildings were destroyed. The entire male population from 12 to 65 years old was gathered in concentration camps located on the outskirts of Grozny and Mozdok. (In some cases, Chechens were kept together with German prisoners of war. Most of the detainees were shot.) February 23, 1944

a specially created group of internal troops carried out an unprecedented operation to evict the entire Chechen-Ingush population (to a single person, including the elderly, women and infants) to Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

However, even after this event, small groups of rebels numbering up to 50 people continued to operate in hard-to-reach mountainous areas until 1957, when the Chechens and Ingush were allowed to return to their places of traditional residence ... "

An abstract certificate sent to headquarters up to the regimental level.

"Owls. secret.

ORDER

Minister of Defense

Russian Federation

Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation

and Head of the Disarmament Group

and elimination of armed formations

on the territory of the Chechen Republic.

T. t. Egorov N. D., Erin V. F., Stepashin S. V.

On the basis of the secret Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On measures to restore constitutional law and order on the territory of the Chechen Republic", preparations are underway to bring one division of the Internal Troops and two divisions of the Ministry of Defense into the Chechen Republic ...

In connection with the expected massive, but unorganized resistance, it was decided to take advantage of this circumstance and carry out mass deportation of the local population under the guise of their organized withdrawal from the combat zone to other regions of the Russian Federation, which will be specified separately.

For this purpose, to deploy temporary detention camps in the territories of Ingushetia, North Ossetia and the Stavropol Territory ...

The foreign policy and information support of these events should be carried out only as a humanitarian action in the name of saving the civilian population of the Chechen

Republic from the atrocities of the Dudayev bandits ...

For the organized conduct of complex events as a humanitarian action, create a coordinating body from representatives of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Nationalities and Regional Policy, the Federal Counterintelligence Service and the Ministry of Emergency Situations ...

All practical work on the deportation of the population should be carried out by the Ministry of Emergency Situations ...

Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation

and Team Leader General of the Army

GRACHEV P.S." [5]

"Top secret.

Headquarters of the North Caucasian Military District.

The Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation ordered: on December 11, 1994, to introduce two motorized rifle and one tank divisions into the territory of the Chechen Republic to assist the internal affairs bodies in restoring constitutional law and order... The approximate deadline for completing the operation is no later than December 20, 1994  
G..."

"So the war has begun. We can no longer be proud of Russia as an island of national stability and bloodless development. There is a war going on in Russia: a civil one, if you look from Moscow, a national liberation war, if you look from Grozny. The separation of Chechnya and a number of other regions of the North Caucasus, apparently, is already inevitable, not depending on either Yeltsin or anyone else. No Yeltsin, no Grachev-Erin-Stepashin-Egorov can stop the historical process. The North Caucasus for more than a hundred years has not become an integral organic part of Russia. Hardly conquered, artificially torn from the Muslim Ummah, survived the bloody revolutionary events and the post-war genocide. The North Caucasus was doomed to secession.

Predicting the development of events in the theater of operations, as always, is almost impossible, especially in a war that has every chance of developing into a partisan one. But the political consequences of the aggression are obvious... In any case, the President will lose. An attempt to capture the capital of Chechnya and suppress all major pockets of resistance may well prove unsuccessful. One should not particularly trust Pavel Grachev's boast that he would have dealt with Grozny in two hours. A mediocre commander led by a demoralized army (and even more demoralized a few days before the invasion by an adventure with mercenaries) is far from the best tool for a military victory, which is unlikely to be achieved not only in two hours, but even in two months. It is also possible to simply defeat our troops in an attempt to storm Grozny ...

The president more and more gives the impression of a person who is in an information cocoon, living in some kind of imaginary country created for him by his inner circle. Through whose eyes does the president look at the world?

Grachev? Lobova? Egorov?

"For the first time since the civil war, the Russian armed forces have taken their starting positions for open and direct suppression of their fellow citizens.

The power of one of the largest armies in the world, equipped at one time for waging the 3rd World War, albeit faded after the collapse of the empire, began hostilities on its own Russian territory ... Colossal, but, in essence, faceless, military power, because There are no political leaders in Russia now who are aware of and, no less important, personify the scale of the military machine that accidentally fell into their hands, and, accordingly, the scale and degree of responsibility that lie on them ... "

"The center of Grozny seems like hell... The city is dead. There are no whole houses there, almost no people without machine guns. To complete the apocalyptic picture, smog hangs over the city, covering Grozny with a dark cap. There are sunny clear days, and in the Chechen capital it is semi-dark and damp. It's soot from oil fires. The first bomb hit the oil storage facility on December 28, the day after Yeltsin's famous "stop the bombing" speech. Then the oil depots were bombed on New Year's Eve, and the first one was shot from tank guns.

When the pre-New Year's assault began, it seemed that the fate of Grozny was decided and the capture of Dudayev's palace was a matter of several hours. But by evening it became clear that the assault had failed. Columns of prisoners and Russian tanks burning in front of the palace created some kind of implausible picture.

Even more improbable was the fact that the next day, the first of January, the picture was repeated exactly. In the same way, without a fight and without resistance, the entire tank column was let through into the city center. At the same time, the impression was that those entering the city were misinformed and believed that they were occupying the already defeated Grozny. They were completely unprepared to take the fight.

The official pre-New Year news reports really shamelessly lied that the city and almost the palace were controlled by the Russian army, and only "separate groups" continued to resist ... On January 1, the tank column, as on the eve, was divided into sectors and destroyed with grenade launchers. The next day, about one hundred and fifty units of Russian armored vehicles burned down in Grozny.

As a result of this two-day operation, several hundred Russian soldiers died, about a hundred were captured. Separate groups of infantrymen, who entered the city on tank armor, survived and fired machine guns for another two or three days, trying either to break out of the city, or to gain a foothold in anticipation of help. However, by the fourth day, when a landing party was thrown to their aid in Grozny, they were already finished with ... "

"Pilots in Chechnya risk practically nothing. "Stingers" Dudaev does not have. Planes drop bombs from a strafing flight and hit right on target: a hospital, a home for the disabled, a market with a massive crowd of people.

Beginning on January 2, the bombing tactics changed somewhat. After the defeat of the New Year's assault, they began to bomb mainly the provinces, and where there are more people: large bazaars, parking lots, places where houses are crowded. In Shali, a ball bomb was dropped on the republican auto parts market.

On the same day and in the same place, a hospital and a food market were bombed. Then the large villages of Atagi and Komsomolskoye, then the village of Chechen - Aul, then ...

No matter what official propaganda says, the actions of the Russian army do not leave

doubts: it considers the Chechen resistance precisely as a people's war and considers the entire population of Chechnya as its enemy ... When Russian troops occupy a residential building, basements are bombarded with grenades.

"In Grozny, the paratroopers are not in awe of the marines, the latter, in turn, despise the ordinary infantry, the troops, as such, hate the internal troops, and all together do not like the authorities. But, by and large, this difficult system of relationships is not so interesting. Much more interesting is exactly what the various branches of the military and the forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs managed to achieve by joint efforts.

The city of Grozny, as shown by the very first fifteen minutes of the trip in the armored personnel carrier, no longer exists. Before the new year, the Chechen capital, surrounded by troops, still looked like a large settlement: there were houses, people lived in them, cars drove through the streets. There is nothing like it now. Grozny is a huge space covered with destroyed and half-burnt buildings. The city is dead. He died and lives some kind of terrible otherworldly life. Artillery strikes somewhere almost without a break around the clock. From time to time, planes appear in the air and methodically bombard quarter after quarter. Fires blaze in the night sky for a long time, which no one extinguishes. The uncleaned corpses of our soldiers are lying on the streets. Stray dogs bite them...

A beautiful war with professional soldiers, smart officers, point hits, serviceable equipment and humane thoughts instead of lice under a helmet is very expensive. It is worth a sober president, a competent government, a stable economy and a working population. Our impoverished, dishonest country cannot wage such a war. Can not. And therefore does not lead.

On January 24, the GRU special forces, who arrived in Chechnya, died almost in full force. According to the official version, an enemy shell hit the building where the commandos were located. However, many argue that everything was somewhat different. The detachment, in order not to set up posts, surrounded itself with mines, and, in addition, brought into the building about 370 kilograms of explosives, the so-called plastite, which is forbidden to be stored in such wild quantities. When the building exploded into the air, only the commander of the detachment, who went out into the street out of need, remained alive. He was so drunk that he couldn't remember how many of his men were left in the room. For two days of excavations, 46 corpses were found in the building ...

But even this cannot be compared with the great "charms" that the entrance to the city brings with it, the impoverished army, embittered by the losses. The fate of people who, in their own skin, are experiencing the restoration of constitutional order by the troops, is to endure robberies and looting from them. At the same time, it is somehow forgotten that Grozny is a Russian city, and its population is 80 percent Russian. Robberies and looting have reached such a scale that sometimes one even gets the impression of carrying out "political information" with all the personnel, giving them the city for a stream and looting if it is taken. Soldiers enter houses unfamiliar to them, mindful of the following instruction from the command: "To enter the entrance together, first a grenade, then you." With the help of grenades, doors are taken out on the floors, and with them electronics, televisions, video equipment and other things of at least some value.

Military counterintelligence, according to its officers, is trying to stop the most egregious cases of robbery and looting, but admits that it is impossible to keep track of everyone. And therefore, although on the doors of many apartments in Grozny there are ads like:

"The apartment was robbed three times. Please do not disturb. ", the city expects another wave of atrocities. This is how the population, rescued by Russia for the third month in a row, feels.

Such is the degree of joy from the "constitutional law and order" advancing from all sides ... "

"At the Rostov district hospital, a "city of the dead" is being deployed, where the corpses of Russian servicemen who died in Chechnya are brought. In total, there are seven such tents in the special territory, where there is no passage without a special pass. In the tents there are three-tiered soldiers' bunks, on which corpses are stacked several times on a bunk. The main procedure is identification. This is difficult to do and sometimes impossible. One of the dead soldiers is missing arms and half of his head. The other, tagged "unidentified", had almost nothing left. The few pieces of his body that we managed to collect are tied in a bundle with a sheet. And from the third, in the neighborhood, everything was preserved, except for the head. Instead, there is something round, like a papier-mâché ball. All bodies are naked, skin color is blue-red. The charred corpses resemble ancient mummies dried up to the very bones. It is impossible to look at this without horror.

That is why mothers who come to the Rostov district military hospital for the identification of their sons are tried not to be allowed into tents with corpses. In the "town", fenced with a camouflage net from the rest of the hospital, a pass, of course, is issued; but only to those whose deceased sons are on the lists of the Rostov Medical Special Purpose Detachment. Since all the hospital corpses are numbered, the employees of the "town" find them quickly, and after identification by their relatives, they carry them to the morgue for processing.

The next stage of sealing in a zinc coffin ... The mother, who identified her son, an infantryman who had burned in the BMP, sobbed hysterically. She could not forgive herself for letting her son go to war. "It was necessary to cut off his fingers, at least his hand, if only they would not take him to serve," she lamented ...

In addition to the "town", there are also "cars". Behind the iron gates of the checkpoint, at the only platform of some kind of railway dead end, there are several refrigerated cars. The day before yesterday there were five of them, today there are already eight ... The whole car, sometimes covered with frost on the inside, was packed to capacity with corpses. They lay on the same three-tier racks as in the "corpse city", consisting of canvas stretchers, and for some reason were slightly covered with earth. In the second carriage lay corpses "worse". If the first ones were almost intact, then these, in the majority, were wrapped in sheets, from which bare, earthy-colored feet protruded. A charred chest lay on some canvas bunks. Nearby, a corpse burned to blackness in an unnatural pose ...

It became especially difficult for everyone after the opening of the sixth carriage, where shapeless pieces of human meat lay on a stretcher. Larger open, smaller tied in sheets. Open the eighth car. All the corpses in it are wrapped in foil ... It is suggested to bury everyone who is not identified in Rostov. In a mass grave. But this will happen only after a special order from the government. In the meantime, all the nameless corpses of soldiers and officers will be stored in "freezers" on the same railway tracks.

"The interim results of the military operation look depressing. In three months of fierce fighting, the federal troops managed to capture the Naursky, Nadterechny, Shchelkovsky districts, since there was almost no resistance here, and take the ruins of Grozny under relative control. The rest of the territory of the republic is partly ("your day, our night") or completely controlled by the militias. Russian troops, according to various estimates, lost about five thousand people killed. More than twenty thousand people died among the civilian population. More than three hundred thousand became refugees. Six settlements were completely destroyed, eighty were partially destroyed. In the coming days, if the militias do not stop resisting, the cities of Argun, Samashki, Shali will be completely bombed ...

From the very first days of the Chechen operation, it became clear that the Russian army did not have a single

a fully combat-ready division (and even a regiment). It has never happened before that military districts formed prefabricated military units from scratch and sent them to war. Even the elite Kantemirovskaya and Tamanskaya divisions gathered officers and soldiers from different units. According to the information of their General Staff, up to 60 percent of the crews of tanks, combat vehicles, crews were formed on the way to Mozdok or immediately before the offensive.

As a result, the military operation in Chechnya acquired the character of irrational violence. By his order to inflict massive air and artillery strikes on the city, Defense Minister Grachev deliberately sacrificed civilians. When the Grad, Uragan, etc., multiple rocket launcher artillery systems began to work actively, it became clear that the losses among civilians would number in the thousands.

For the first time in the entire history of their existence, the role of punitive troops was imposed on the Russian Air Force. Massive bombing of populated areas using ball, needle and vacuum bombs is prohibited even in interstate wars.

"Amirkhanov, the general director of the Ingushvodstroy association, was dragged out of his own apartment in Grozny and taken to Mozdok. They were kept in an unheated carriage, handcuffed, without food. They beat me with truncheons, kicked me, fists, tightened handcuffs on fresh wounds, demanded to recognize myself as a Dudaevite.

In the village of Assinovskaya, an employee of the traffic police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ingushetia and the head of the OFSK of the Sunzhensky district Cherbizhiev were beaten and robbed by riot police in the village of Assinovskaya. The riot police took two unknown persons together with Tochiev into the field and shot them.

On the way home from work near the village of Samashki, Khidaev, deputy prosecutor of the Sunzhensky district, was captured.

They kept him for almost a day in a frozen bus, handcuffed. Police officer Dzhamulaev, who was on his way from home to work, was arrested at the same post. He was taken to a base near the village of Assinovskaya and brutally beaten, demanding to indicate the location of "Ingush militants ..."

"On NTV they played terrible footage from the military field morgue, and the day before, General Grachev spoke on RTV with a story (not the first) about the completion of the "unique military operation" carried out in Chechnya under his leadership. He spoke about it as if he had succeeded in it. He said this with a lecherous-victorious smile to the viewers, who, as it were, did not see the results of his work of the city of the skeleton ... Well, we also have such a character: he can be rude behind his eyes, he can, contrary to obviousness, looking straight and not blinking at the TV camera, call failure a success ... "

"It has already been reported about the order of the leadership of the FMS (Federal Migration Service) not to grant the status of forced migrants to refugees of Chechen nationality ...

On January 31, the leadership of the migration service sent a telegram to the localities correcting the previous one. It instructs the regional offices of the FMS not to register as forced migrants anyone who left Chechnya, regardless of nationality.

The purpose of both orders of the FMS is clear: the state does not want to take responsibility for the fate of thousands of homeless and unemployed people. The authorities are trying to convince the public that what is happening in Chechnya is akin to an earthquake, a natural disaster, for the consequences of which no one is to blame.

As it became known to our committee, in the temporary accommodation camps, employees of the Federal Grid Company

conduct "conversations" with Russian refugees (sometimes by no means voluntary), during which they offer to sign a paper stating that people fled not from Russian aviation bombs, but from Dudayev's regime.

Such a policy towards homeless people is officially explained by the fact that they will be given the opportunity to return to.

Grozny. However, most refugees, especially Russians, do not want to, and cannot, return to.

Chechnya. More than two hundred thousand people of Russian nationality left Chechnya ... "

"From about mid-January 1995, the Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev was put on the All-Russian criminal wanted list. In accordance with traditional technology, any serious criminal who is on the run is declared on such a wanted list. His photograph and special signs are placed on the stands "The police are looking for them", and the authorities are given the appropriate orientation.

In the case of Dzhokhar Dudayev, the system, it would seem, should be particularly effective. All the federal forces, drawn into the republic, do nothing but catch Dudayev. The army and internal troops, at the slightest rumor about the whereabouts of Dudayev, immediately begin to rush there into battle.

At the same time, counterintelligence officers begin to mysteriously wink their eyes and click their tongues, hinting that the days of the Chechen leader are numbered, he is surrounded, his movements are controlled and almost a few hours remain until his capture. The representative of the Federal Counterintelligence Service, General Mikhailov, even hinted that the Chechen leader, through the joint efforts of the army, police and FSK, is now being taken to a place where he can be quickly and effectively captured. However, after a month from the moment of active all-Russian events, the authorities managed to capture only the 70-year-old elder brother of Dzhokhar Dudaev, Bekmurza, who was arrested in Grozny, where he worked as a bus driver ...

The most curious thing about this story is that for some reason Dudayev's location is a problem only for the federal authorities.

On February 2, Konstantin Borovoy personally met with Dudayev directly in Chechnya, who without any particular difficulties agreed on this meeting right in Moscow with representatives of the Chechen leader. Dudayev, therefore, has good communication not only with his formations in the republic, but also with the capital itself, which even the army and special services can get through from Grozny only with the help of their special communications.

Moreover, the Chechen leader periodically gives interviews to journalists from various publications. The other day, the All-Russian wanted man starred in the program of the TV journalist Lyubimov and for almost an hour (!) Live on the radio answered questions from students and teachers at Harvard University. What, exactly, is the point? How to evaluate the effectiveness and professionalism of native law enforcement agencies?

Option two: either

contrary to official statements, the federal authorities do not want to search for Dudayev, or they simply do not know how to do it. Even if we assume that the Federal Grid Company, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Moscow Region, taken together, do not have enough people and agents to organize ambushes in the vicinity of Grozny, then they must have some kind of equipment.

It is not the Chechen republican satellite that Dzhokhar Musaevich uses for his telephone conversations and foreign speeches, but he launches carrier pigeons



to lead the armed forces.

Is it possible to try to find the President of Chechnya with the help of direction finding devices or determine which satellite channels he uses? - asked the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Federal Grid Company, General Alexander Mikhailov. This is a very difficult question, the general replied.

What neither military intelligence, nor the Federal Grid Company, nor the Ministry of Internal Affairs succeeded, our correspondent did. He not only tracked down Dzhokhar Dudayev, but also interviewed him. "I did not think that the military was capable of such cruelty towards the Population. From politicians I assumed any deceit for four years they taught me. But in the Soviet army there have always been concepts of honor, conscience, protection of the population, the Fatherland. Today, everything is completely different. Murder is passed off as heroism, looting as valor. And for this they hand out orders. Yesterday I saw a little girl in the hospital. Both of her legs were blown off by the bomb. Mother and older sister were killed. What combat mission did that pilot perform when he bombed the civilian population of Vedeno? Well, Chechens are still being killed, of course. But Russians are also being killed... Mosques are being destroyed. We find maps from captured officers where mosques are marked with crosses. But they also hit churches where Russian old men hide from shelling. What the army is doing in Chechnya is not war, but genocide... The main thing now is to transfer the war to enemy territory. Moreover, this movement is already unfolding spontaneously. And suicide squads are created on their own. Of those who are ready to die in order to avenge the children and parents who died from the bombing. We have the coordinates of the specific perpetrators of the deaths of thousands of peaceful Chechens... The Chechen war will come to your homes!

I don't know what Russia has in mind, but I know that its Plans include the complete annihilation of the Chechen people. This is a government program. You Russians are sick of Russism. This is worse than fascism. Only time will heal you...

War in Chechnya. War has its own rules and laws, but you have not mastered them and will disentangle the consequences of your aggression in Chechnya and in Abkhazia, and in Georgia, and in Nagorno-Karabakh, and in Azerbaijan, and in Moldova, and in the Baltic states, and in Tajikistan, where you covered everything with blood!. The whole world saw that Russia and the Russians are dangerous. Russians are incapable of governing the country without totalitarian regimes. Bayonet, death, blood and fear that's what R can bear.

"74-year-old Yevgenia Fedorovna and her husband, 83-year-old Alexander Georgievich, fled Grozny at the end of January. Prior to this, the couple spent about a month in the basement, fleeing from Russian bombs and shells. "When the soldiers came, and we finally got out of the cellars, they were very surprised:

"We were told that there was not a single Russian in the city!" In fact, everything was the opposite: as soon as the first bombings began, the Chechens went to their relatives in the villages, but we had nowhere to go. Russians and militants remained in the city. We felt very sorry for the soldiers who entered the city. In appearance they were just children, it was only later that these hefty, always drunk contractors appeared. The soldiers were poorly dressed and very hungry. My daughter made a fire in the yard and began to bake pancakes for them, they pounced on food like animals, "recalls Evgenia Fedorovna.

Sometimes Yevgenia Fedorovna goes to church. The Orthodox Church of the Holy Archangel Michael is one for the whole city. In fact, the cathedral itself no longer exists. The skeleton remains of the church. On January 7, Christmas was celebrated here under heavy fire. There was even a widespread belief among local Russians that the church was "spellbound" from "Christian shells", so when it was especially scary, people gathered in the temple. Alas, at the end of January, the church bell tower was demolished by heavy fire. The rector of the temple, father Anatoly, not afraid of bullets or shells, more than once made his way to the surrounded Russian soldiers, persuading them

stop the senseless bloodshed. The Chechens gave the priest their word that they would let the soldiers go home to their mothers.

"A believer would never have done this horror," Father Anatoly says. —

Under Dudayev, life for Russians was not easy. But, of course, we are no better now. Violence and the blood of innocent people cannot produce good. I especially feel sorry for our Russian old women, when I see that these grandmothers who survived the horror of the war, miraculously escaped grandmothers, stand at the crossroads and beg for alms to buy bread for themselves, I get scared."

"The true scale of the tragedy that broke out in the Chechen village of Samashki will most likely be revealed some time later. But it is already clear now: Samashki can be put in the same mournful row with Lidice, Khatyn and Songbi ...

From the very beginning of the war in Chechnya, Samashki were like a bone in the throat of the Russian command. The village is located ten kilometers from the conditional Chechen-Ingush border, the Rostov-Baku highway and the railway pass through it.

The victorious march of the federal troops was interrupted as soon as it had begun: the inhabitants of Samashki categorically refused to let the tank columns through. Then the troops circled the village from the north, and it turned out to be in a semi-blockade, only the road to the south, towards the regional center Achkhoy-Martan, remained free.

Throughout the winter, the Russian command was not up to Samashki: there were heavy battles for Grozny ... By April 6, the situation around the village escalated to the limit: Shamil Basayev's group approached from the south, and the federal command transferred here a combined OMON detachment, internal troops, about 100 pieces of artillery and presented the last ultimatum, according to which all the militants had to leave the village, and the inhabitants had to hand over 264 machine guns, 3 machine guns and 2 armored personnel carriers.

The Council of Elders decided to fulfill these conditions and did not let Basayev into the village, and about 70 militiamen left towards the Sunzha Range. That day only four armed men remained in Samashki. The term of the ultimatum expired by 9 am on April 7, but already on the night of April 6-7, artillery fire was opened on the defenseless village, and at 5 am aircraft struck. Panic broke out among the locals. On the morning of April 7, about 300 Samashkins left the village. At 10 o'clock the negotiations were continued, but they did not lead to anything, because the inhabitants could not hand over the required amount of weapons, which they did not have. At 2 p.m., the commander of the Zapad group, General Lityakov, repeated the ultimatum, and by evening the Russian units broke into the village.

The "purge of the village" lasted four days, during which neither the press nor representatives of the Red Cross were allowed into the village. What was going on in Samashki these days has one definition of genocide. In Samashki, hundreds of Chechens died in one day on April 8. The outrages began immediately after entering the village. The massacre of innocent people was fast and terrible. "Suspicious" houses were first thrown with grenades, and then "processed" with "Bumblebee" flamethrowers. In front of the eyes of a local resident Yanist Bisultanova, an old man was shot dead when he begged for mercy and pointed to his order bars. Ruslan V.'s 90-year-old father-in-law was killed, who once participated in the liberation of Bucharest and Sofia ... During the "purge" about 40 villagers fled into the forest and tried to sit there. However, artillery hit the forest. Almost all of them died under artillery fire ...

As of April 16 alone, 211 fresh graves were dug in the village cemetery, and more are added every day. Many Samashki residents are buried in other places... The news of the tragedy of Samashki spread throughout Chechnya and Ingushetia. "Pacification" Samashek played into the hands

Dudayev in inciting anti-Russian sentiment. Recently, the Chechen president spoke on underground television and expressed confidence that the Chechens would remember the lesson of Samashki. There can be no doubt that this will be the case.

"Aminat Gunasheva (resident of Samashki):

"On May 17, when we were picketing near the State Duma, Stanislav Govorukhin came out of the entrance, recognized us and ran away. Cowardly. When he was in Samashki, he saw our mass graves and burned houses. People then approached him, brought the remains of their loved ones, some ashes, some bones ... Federal troops have been standing near Samashki since January of this year. And all these months, every day we expected the beginning of the assault ...

On the morning of April 7, the Russian commanders said that if we did not hand over 286 machine guns to them by 4 p.m., the assault on the village would begin. There was nowhere to take weapons, because on that very day all the soldiers left Samashki. They were persuaded by the old people. The commanders firmly promised that if all the armed defenders left the village, the troops would not enter it ... At the meeting, the people decided to slaughter cattle, sell meat and buy machine guns from Russian military. Do you know where weapons come from to the Chechens from the ground and from the air under a complete blockade? We buy it from Russian commissaries and exchange it for food from the ever-hungry conscripts. Often a combat grenade is given for a loaf of bread. But that day the situation was hopeless. There was no way we could get what we needed so soon. They asked for a week. But, obviously, the ultimatum was only a pretext, because no one even waited for the promised 16 hours. It all started two hours earlier...

... We sat, waiting for our fate. They could not run away, they were afraid that the uncle, who had been wounded earlier, would bleed to death. We hear how the gates are opened, how an armored personnel carrier drives in, how a grenade is thrown into an empty basement. We entered the room. There were 18-20 of them. They look sober, only their eyes are glassy. They saw my uncle: "When did it hurt? Where is the machine? Where are the spirits? Raisa rushed to those who came: "Do not kill, there is no one in the house, there are no machine guns, dad is seriously wounded. Do you also have a father?" "We have an order to kill everyone from 14 to 65 years old," the newcomers shouted and began to knock over buckets of water with their feet. And we already knew what it meant: now they would certainly burn it, and poured out the water so that there was nothing to extinguish. The riot police left the room. They threw a grenade at the door. Raisa was hurt. She moaned. I heard someone say, "What?" Nearby they answered: "Baba is still alive." It's about Raisa. After these words, two shots from a flamethrower. For some reason, I couldn't bring myself to close my eyes. She knew that they would kill her now, and she wanted only one to die immediately, without pain. But they are gone. I looked around. Raisa was dead, her uncle too, but Asya was alive. We lay with her, afraid to move. The trellis, curtain, lenolium, plastic buckets burned. We were left to live by mistake, mistaking for the dead ...

I approached the school. There, the women were taking several hanged boys out of the noose. Looks like grades 1-3. The children ran out of the building in terror. They were caught and strangled on a wire. The eyes popped out of their sockets, the faces were swollen and unrecognizable. Nearby was a pile of burnt bones, the remains of about 30 more schoolchildren. According to eyewitnesses, they were also hanged and then burned with a flamethrower. On the wall something brown was written: "Museum exhibit the future of Chechnya." And one more thing: "The Russian bear woke up." I couldn't go anywhere else. Returned home. Only the walls remained of the house. The rest burned down. Asya and I collected the ashes and bones of Uncle Nasreidin and Raisa in oilcloth and newsprint. Uncle lived for 47 years, and Raisa was supposed to turn 23 in July.

We came to Moscow not only to convey to you the pain of our people, we wanted, first of all, to remind you of the dead soldiers. It is wild for us to watch how their bodies are taken out by helicopters to the mountains and dumped there to be torn to pieces by wild animals, how the corpses decompose in the lake of poisonous waste from the chemical plant (between Grozny and the 1st dairy plant), dumped into silos.

... During a picket near the Duma building, an elderly, decently dressed lady jumped out. She laughed at us, showed her tongue, made faces. She was supported by some men. They spat gum at us...

I want everyone to know: yes, we feel unbearably sorry for our dead, but we also feel sorry for Russia. What will happen when the murderers, rapists and drug addicts who are outrageous in our land today return to their homeland? And I still don't understand how you can live, knowing that now your military is burning our children alive with flamethrowers? In front of the parents, they crush the child with an armored personnel carrier and shout to the mother:

"Look, b ....., do not turn away!" How do you then look into the eyes of your mothers, your wives, your children?

"It happened on January 31," Ensign Eduard Shakhbazov says. I was sitting in ambush when I saw a short Chechen running towards us.

He cocked the trigger of the machine gun, took aim. But, having looked closely, he saw quite a boy and involuntarily lowered the machine gun. He was about 15 meters away from our BMP when a cry was heard: "Allah Akbar!" and there was a terrible explosion. The boy was torn to pieces, three of my soldiers were wounded and our BMP was knocked out. The blast knocked me to the ground. Jumping up, I saw about a dozen more teenagers running towards our combat vehicles - live shells ... "

"Russian pilots have clearly demonstrated their ability to deliver pinpoint strikes. Yesterday, during the bombardment of the mountain village of Vedenov, the house of Shamil Basayev, commander of the Southern Front of Dudayev's illegal formations, was destroyed by a direct hit by an air bomb.

Message broadcast by all media on June 1, 1995. The report did not say anything about the fact that 11 relatives of Shamil Basayev were killed in the house destroyed by the "pinpoint" hit.

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### Chapter 3

Allaverdi the Lord is with you,

Here are the words meaning, and with it more than once

I got up and walked, ready to fight,

War-torn Caucasus.

From a song born 150 years

back during the Caucasian War.

The early November twilight was already deepening over Moscow when the antique bronze clock in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington struck one in the afternoon. The clock has been here since President Coolidge and made it into the papers not too long ago when President Reagan overwrapped it and had to spend \$456 in taxpayer pockets to fix it. It was with the chime of the clock that the doors of the Oval Office opened to let in members of the National Security Council under the President of the United States of America. Short handshakes and greetings, interrupted by the surprised remarks of President Clinton, looking through some documents. Among those present were: Secretary of State Christopher, Secretary of Defense Peri, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Sharikoshvili and one of the Deputy Directors of the CIA Macridge.

President Clinton had his usual bashful smile on his face. In his youth, he avoided military service to avoid being sent to Vietnam, and now the entire global power of the US military was in his hands as the Supreme Commander.

John, the President turned to General Sharikoshvili.

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Did you get the necessary cards? I want to find out where is the province of Russia where some unpleasant events are brewing.

The general handed in a floppy disk and a map appeared on the computer screen, obviously taken from the TV screen of one of the Moscow news programs, since along with a rough geographical scheme, some letters of the channel's markings were visible on the image.

Is that all you could find? Clinton asked in surprise.

We also have satellite photographs of this area, since the Soviet Union once concentrated several missile bases here, - the general answered, -

but I thought, sir, that you simply wanted to understand where this area is. And it is quite difficult to do this from satellite photographs. The Black Sea begins a little to the left of this in the diagram, and the Caspian Sea begins a little to the right (also not visible). This part, marked in green, is Chechnya. To the north is Russia itself, and to the south Georgia, my dear ancestral home (General Sharikoshvili came from a noble Georgian family who fled west after the 1917 revolution in Russia).

Che-chnya, - the president repeated syllable by syllable, emphasizing the last syllable.

The general pressed a key and the diagram disappeared, giving way to a smaller image on the screen, where the entire Isthmus of the Caucasus appeared in the ornament of the Black and Caspian Seas with a small red dot on it, marking the location of Chechnya.

Merciful God! Clinton exclaimed.

They are even smaller than Israel!

"I'm afraid that's exactly the case, Mr. President," the general confirmed. —

And this territory has been in a state of open rebellion against Moscow for several years now. The Kremlin is going to restore order there and has already gathered around the troops no less than before the invasion of Afghanistan. We receive constant information from satellites and not only from satellites. Moscow is preparing a major military operation.

"They're completely out of their minds," Secretary Christopher sighed.

in his maniacal desire to confirm in any way the former greatness that collapsed along with the Soviet Union. And no longer think about the consequences ...

- What do you want to say? Clinton didn't understand. The secretary of state's thin, emaciated face appeared like a smile.

- Afghanistan became the detonator of the explosion that smashed the USSR. This adventure can serve as a detonator for the explosion of the rest of Russia.

"You're exaggerating, Warren," the president shook his head.

Afghanistan had a common border with Pakistan, through which aid came from almost all over the world. And here?

"If you'll let me, sir?" Macridge of the CIA entered the conversation.

"Of course, Mike," Clinton nodded. —

Speak.

- Near Chechnya, - said the CIA representative, -

common border with Russia. Through her, she receives more help than Afghanistan through the border with Pakistan. It will be a war, Mr. President, in which ONE PART OF RUSSIA WILL FIGHT AGAINST ANOTHER on the territory of Chechnya. As in the old days, when some remote territory was chosen to clarify the relationship between the feudal clans. I'm exaggerating, of course, sir. But this is precisely the crux of the problem.

"Perhaps," the president began uncertainly. —

We should make some kind of statement to stop all this madness...

—

Not now," Macridge held up a warning finger. —

It might startle them. It shouldn't concern us at all.

"In Moscow, they already tried to find out from Pickering how we would react to all this," put in Christopher.

- And what did he answer? the president was alarmed.

"Pickering has been working in the Third World for years," the Secretary of State shrugged.

—

Naturally, he replied that this was Russia's internal affair.

- God bless! The president calmed down. —

This is their territory. Is not it? Clinton turned to the CIA official. What do you think, Mike, how long will all this take Yeltsin?

"According to our knowledge," Macridge replied, "

in Moscow they plan to finish everything in 10 days. Worst case two weeks. But I think, Mr. President, that all this will last much longer. Much longer, sir. CIVIL WARS DO NOT END IN A WEEKLY. NEVER. AND ALL THE MORE IN RUSSIA. Let me repeat our conclusion. This will not be a war in Chechnya, but a war on the territory of Chechnya between one part of Russia and another, which dreams of restoring its former greatness. And it will end with some preliminary stabilization of the southern front, which will tend to change for a considerable time. Mainly to the north. You know what I'm talking about gentlemen...

On December 1, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the ultimatum presented to General Dudayev expired. Dudayev declared his readiness for negotiations with President Yeltsin. Of course, no one heard him. Everyone held their breath, waiting for the invasion. But the Kremlin was silent. And the newspapers in unison celebrated the 60th anniversary of Kirov's assassination, sucking on the old and putting forward new versions, including the one that the first secretary of the Leningrad Regional Committee shot himself out of guilt before Comrade Stalin.

Yegor Gaidar, leader of the Russia's Choice party, was very worried about the prospects for future elections.

"If we lose the next election," Gaidar wisely said, "we will continue our discussions in the concentration camp, unless the winners prefer mass executions."

His party colleague, the chairman of the Duma Defense Committee, Sergei Yushenkov, was in Grozny, where he was received by General Dudayev. To Yushenkov's cautious question about how the president of Ichkeria felt about the Kremlin's promise to introduce a state of emergency on the territory of the republic, the general smiled and replied that Yeltsin should have been worried about when he, Dudayev, would declare a state of emergency throughout Russia. Dudayev was clearly in a good mood, and therefore granted Yushenkov two Russian prisoners named Drozdov and Prokopov. Both had recently served in the illustrious Taman division and, without a second of hesitation, told the flocked journalists how FSK employees recruited them for some mysterious "mentoring activity" on different outskirts of the former empire.

At 14:10 and 15:40 "unidentified aircraft" again flew in. There were about a dozen of them, and this time they clearly aimed to bomb the house where the family of General Dudayev lived.

At the height of the bombing, Yeltsin's press secretary, Vyacheslav Kostikov, announced that "the President has embarked on comprehensive measures to restore constitutional law on the territory of Chechnya."

From Chechnya, quite inopportune, the news came that for each new bombardment of Grozny, one Russian prisoner would be hanged. Here even Defense Minister Grachev became worried and did not think of anything better than to call Yushenkov in Grozny, asking him not to allow the public execution of military personnel. Surprised, Yushenkov replied that he had nothing at all about this is not known.

A little later, the FSK, apparently in order to restore its shattered reputation with the recruitment of officers and soldiers for the Caucasian war, made a statement that, against the backdrop of impending events, almost no one heard. It turns out that, continuing the investigation into the murder of journalist Dmitry Kholodov, counterintelligence came to an unnamed GRU officer, apparently a storekeeper. He was found missing several thousand special fuses for special "sabotage" mines.

No one heard this, since there was already a steady rumor in Moscow about the upcoming exchange of 50,000th bills. Despite the assurances of the Central Bank about the absurdity of such rumors, experienced residents, of course, did not believe a single word spoken by the authorities, and shops and stalls immediately stopped accepting these bills.

And vice-admiral from the KGB Zheredevsky, surrounded by Kurginyan, Borovoy and some young girls, told the townsfolk at night, who turned on the first television program, about the intrigues of the CIA against the USSR and Russia.

On December 2, at the auctions of the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange, the US dollar exchange rate reached 3,262 rubles. A little later, a group of armed men in masks and camouflage cordoned off the building of the capital's mayor's office and tried to break into the premises of the Most bank, first putting the bank guards in the wet snow with their noses. A hefty young man in a mask and with a machine gun in his hands in the center of Moscow sedately beat with his boot in the crotch of the guards lying face down on the wet pavement, as it turned out later, for not quite decent statements addressed to him.

At the call of the president of the bank "Most" Gusinsky, cars of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Grid Company flew up to the city hall, flashing blue lights and howling sirens. The FSK capture group rushed at the masked unknowns and stopped in indecision. They presented certificates saying that the raiders represent the security service of the President of Russia. In other words, they are subordinates of General Korzhakov.

After 10 minutes, everyone left, and another half an hour later, the head of the FGC department for Moscow and the Moscow region, General Savostyanov, was removed from his post. Only the President could remove it, which he did.

The capital was buzzing all over, discussing the unprecedented incident. They said different things, that Gusinsky did not allocate 100 billion rubles too quickly, which were required for the restoration of President Yeltsin's hunting grounds in Zavidovo, and that an open war began between the all-powerful favorite-temporary worker Korzhakov and the mayor of the capital, Yuri Luzhkov, who allegedly aims for the presidency of Russia. Others assured that Korzhakov and Luzhkov, being neighbors in their dachas, did not share some plot and thus sort things out.

Korzhakov himself, who agreed to give an interview, said with a smile that his favorite pastime was geese hunting. The president of the Most bank, Gusinsky, immediately took the hint and drove off to London.

Against the backdrop of the "big politics" that so clearly splashed out on the public, when a dismantling began in the center of Moscow not of some faceless criminal groups, but of powerful feudal clans of the Russian Kingdom, the messages from Chechnya somehow faded. In particular, the news that during yesterday's air raids on Grozny 4 people were killed and 9 wounded.



Along the way, it turned out that 120 Russian servicemen fell into the hands of Dudayev, and not 70, as previously reported. Like abandoned children, they showed their personal signs confirming that they were military personnel of the army of a great power. It turned out, by the way, that among them is Captain Andrei Rusakov, known to journalists since the storming of the White House in October 1993. Captain Rusakov willingly told how he was recruited through the Special Department, promising to pay 150 million to his family in case of death.

Newspapers noted that bad traditions, irresponsibility and incompetence were taking over in Russia. "Russian mercenary soldiers are dying and languishing in captivity in order to bring the adventurer Khasbulatov and the criminal Labozanov to power."

The FSK immediately responded, despite the scandal and commotion that reigned in the office, in connection with the dismissal of General Savostyanov. The head of the DSP, General Mikhailov, biting his lips, categorically denied any involvement of his department in the Russian servicemen captured in Grozny and, by the way, expressed bewilderment at the fact that they are called "mercenaries."

"They are fighting, the general explained, on the territory of Russia and for its interests, and they should not be called "mercenaries", but "volunteers". Nobody fundamentally objected. Everyone just asked the question: why is Russia, for whose interests the soldiers are fighting in Chechnya, so stubbornly refusing them? At the same time and O. Attorney General of Russia Ilyushenko reported to the public about the article "Pasha-Mercedes" published in the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper, where the name of Minister Pavel Grachev was directly connected with the murder of Dmitry Kholodov, and at the same time it was said about the addiction of the army general to expensive "foreign cars", which there were six of him and all Mercedes.

And about. The Prosecutor General explained that the Mercedes were purchased by the general for official purposes with the permission of President Yeltsin, and there is simply no such thing as "corruption" in Russian legislation. And he urged "to rein in the press."

And bombs continue to fall on Grozny from "opposition planes." Duma deputies Yushenkov and Pamfilova, who arrived in Grozny for Russian soldiers, sitting in a bomb shelter, said that Grozny was being bombed by "unconditionally Russian planes" and called on Yeltsin to stop this farce.

Yeltsin himself at that time handed crosses to disabled participants in the marathon race in wheelchairs. The President was in a great mood, joking and laughing. General Korzhakov, on the contrary, was gloomy. As time went on, it was not only impossible to get an order from Yeltsin to speak, but even to choose the time to read him an analytical note, on which his people had been working for the last two quarters, indicating the only possible way to lead the country out of the chaos and networks of the Zionist conspiracy. Yesterday, the President chatted for half a day with Alevtina Fedulova, the former main "pioneer" of the USSR, and now the head of the "Women of Russia" faction in the Duma, today he is presenting orders to the disabled. No, all this, of course, is useful, but you need to think about saving the Fatherland and finally start "real hunting for geese."

General Korzhakov, at times, was simply struck by the inconsistency of the President. How Ivan the Terrible kills for a week, repents for a week. Comrade Stalin laughed at this. Over inconsistency. Boris Nikolaevich was painfully fooled at one time by these, pardon the expression, democrats. In the 9th Directorate of the KGB, where Korzhakov began his dangerous service, such delusion was quite rightly called "ideological intoxication." I had to pour a powerful antidote into Boris Nikolayevich.

Somehow recently, the artist Ilya Glazunov is one of the few, according to Korzhakov,

of truly talented Russian artists, he painted a large picture, which depicted an Orthodox man, naked to the waist, but in military breeches and boots, raising not a cross to heaven, but a Kalashnikov assault rifle. And on his buckle, like the Nazi soldiers (albeit in Russian), it is inscribed: "God is with us!" The picture was called "Wake up, Russia!" Exhibited in the Manezh, this picture caused a lot of noise. Especially "God with us". The buckles of the Wehrmacht soldiers were still remembered by many. Someone sang something to Yeltsin about the "fascisization of art" and he became so angry that he almost ordered Glazunov to be removed from the Russian academics.

But, hovering with the President's broom in the bathhouse, Korzhakov heartily explained to him in his own words how everyone who is not lazy is now wiping their feet on Mother Russia. Estonians and Latvians, Chechens and just blacks. And Russia stands alone without a shirt, but with a gun and trusts in God.

Already shed a tear Boris Nikolaevich. He personally came to the Manege the next day. Glazunov, as he saw the President, trembled all over, decided it was obvious that his end had come. Yeltsin liked the picture. It was just his level of understanding of art. Glazunov confusedly began to explain what he actually wanted to express in his call "Wake up, Russia!", But Yeltsin interrupted him.

Of yesterday's explanations, for some reason, the President remembered only about the Estonians, how they violate the rights of the Russian population at home. And that's why he said:

"Estonians, you see, have adopted their law on citizenship..."

"

Here, here, according to the artist nodded his head

This is exactly what I wanted to show, Boris Nikolaevich.

The President granted Glazunov with a kiss and a promise that Russia would soon wake up. Then he left.

It was another slap in the face that the President publicly threw at his beloved "democratic public", shouting something about the fascist threat and the restoration of totalitarianism. For some reason, the Democrats constantly appealed to the President with these claims, and, it must be said, he graciously listened to them from time to time. He once heard that in St. Petersburg the FSK is run by a certain Cherkesov, who became famous in communist times for the fierce persecution of all dissidents, whose name even became a household name in the city on the Neva. The President gasped along with the "democratic intelligentsia", and a couple of weeks later he signed a decree on the promotion of that same Cherkesov to lieutenant general. Or, let's say, what only "democrats" did not tell the President about the governor of Primorye Nazdratenko: that there is no place to put stigma on him, that he does such arbitrariness in the region that he cannot even be called totalitarian. Even in the Eastern despotisms of antiquity there was more legality. Yeltsin summoned Nazdratenko to Moscow and himself presented the governor with the order "For Personal Courage".

There were, however, reverse cases.

How many times has General Korzhakov suggested to the President that it is high time to disband the so-called "Department for Human Rights under the President of Russia", headed by former political prisoner Sergei Kovalev, who is in the service of international Zionism. The President listened favorably, but the administration did not disperse everything.

Sergei Kovalev, however, stopped admitting to his person. And that's good.

And therefore, not without reason, General Korzhakov was afraid that the President would be fooled again and he would go to negotiations with Dudayev in order to peacefully solve the Chechen problem and again disgrace Russia to the whole world, forced to negotiate with the bandits instead of destroying them. So far, however, sometimes with difficulty, it has been possible to do everything so that nothing like this happens, blocking the way to the head of state for all "Judaic people".

"Open fire and you will unite the nation!" wisely remarked by one of the greats of the past. But the nation needs to be prepared for the opening of fire, so that it itself craves it.

In the bowels of the Federal Grid Company and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they considered all sorts of options. For example, to organize an explosion by the Chechens of some object of "increased danger". No, such a variant will boomerang on the "organs" themselves: why was it allowed? In addition, instead of "uniting the nation", it can cause uncontrollable panic among the population. Better, let's say, is the capture by the Chechens in Moscow of a "kindergarten" or "a bus with peaceful residents."

But as soon as General Korzhakov held one meeting with senior officials on this topic, the whole plan got into the newspapers the next day. It was absolutely impossible to work!

Meanwhile, deputies Yushenkov and Pamfilova returned from Chechnya, bringing with them two Russian prisoners granted by Dudayev: Lieutenant Dmitry Volfovich and Private Alexander Danilov. Lieutenant Volfovich served in the elite Kantemirovskaya division and was recruited by FSK officers to Chechnya for 6 million rubles with special additional payments in case of injury or death.

Upon learning of this, the commander of the Kantemirovskaya division, General Polyakov, defiantly resigned. As a Russian officer, he was outraged that the FSK was recruiting his subordinates behind his back. However, the noble gesture of the general did not cause any public outcry.

Much more interesting was the report that the commander of the 14th Russian Army, the famous General Lebed, exposed and caught the former KGB major, now FSK Budnik, who was collecting dirt on him. Drunk to the point of insensibility, the counterintelligence officer lost his official ID and was "surrendered" by his own secret source, nicknamed "Chamomile".

On the same day, President Yeltsin issued a decree ordering the study of the Constitution of the Russian Federation in schools.

Former vice-president Rutskoi, recently released from prison under an amnesty, unexpectedly showed up in Kemerovo and vowed that when he became president, "the entire current government, headed by Yeltsin, will go to the dock."

In Chechnya, Russian prisoners, waiting for their fate to be decided, were repairing their former tanks captured by Dudayev.

Having handed over the prisoners brought, Colonel Yushenkov stated that he himself saw planes and helicopters with painted over identification marks in Mozdok and demanded that all those involved in this adventure be brought to justice. Yushenkov showed a cassette with the testimony of a pilot shot down by Chechens, where he admitted that he worked as a test pilot at an aircraft repair plant near Stavropol and was recruited by the FSK for 10 million rubles plus coffin.

In parallel with Yushenkov, the chairman of the State Press Committee, Gryzunov, who had a reputation as a liberal from the APN, also gathered journalists.

Gryzunov explained to journalists that the current relations with Chechnya are developing on two levels: military and political. He acknowledged that the three powerful military groups deployed along the perimeter of the Chechen borders would be brought into action when all options for compromise were exhausted. Of all the compromises that have so far been offered to Chechnya, there has been an offer of unconditional surrender and disarmament.

Moscow emphasized in every possible way that this was the only topic that it was ready to discuss with General Dudayev.

At the end of his speech, Gryzunov unexpectedly accused Dudayev of cowardice, since he was not going to fight on his own, but through his people. One might have thought, listening to Gryzunov, that Yeltsin had several times suggested to Dudayev that the matter be resolved by a duel, and that he sent "his people" instead of himself. From the answer to the question: are there any other ways of waging war, other than "not through one's own people." Grizunov dodged.

The next day, December 4, the peacekeeper Khasbulatov himself showed up in Moscow, miraculously escaping Chechnya along with his accomplices. From the former "speaker" everything was like water off a duck's back. Without blinking an eye, he declared that his mission as a "peacemaker" was over. "Russia is bringing troops into Chechnya and I can no longer control the situation." And instantly

disappeared.

We will not judge him strictly, but only remember that Khasbulatov also belongs to the same proud and unsubdued people, which is called Chechen. Another great Russian general, liberal Yermolov, a smart and observant man, said:

"Chechens are not subject to re-education. They need to be exterminated."

As a baby in February 1944, Ruslan Khasbulatov, in an unheated freight car, rode in the arms of a sobbing mother to Northern Kazakhstan towards the unknown. The mother, warming six-month-old Ruslan with her warmth, sobbed because her husband and father had already died from the cold, hunger and bullying of the convoy.

If Ruslan, who miraculously survived and grew up, as it should be in the traditions of his people, vowed to avenge the humiliation of his country, his people and his family, then, really, he could well feel like a great triumph.

Everyone remembers with what powerful energy the great trainer, without cracking a scourge for a small one, he controlled puppets and mannequins in the arena called the Supreme Soviet of Russia. How close he was already to the supreme power. With what ease he forever disgraced Russia, forcing her to open fire from tanks and armored personnel carriers in her own capital, when the Government House, the mayor's office, Ostankino were burning, glass was falling from the windows and windows of the "capital of the world" and corpses were lying on the streets.

Returning from prison on a wave of irreconcilable socio-political contradictions raging in Russia, he in the shortest possible time, by simple and ingenuous methods, dragged Russia into a shameful and unfaithful colonial adventure, immediately taking revenge on both Russia and Chechnya for the fact that neither there nor here he did not find a suitable place.

Even though these are only our assumptions, they must be kept in mind when assessing a whole series of events that inexorably lead our country along the path to hell ...

While Khasbulatov returned to Moscow to oversee the continuation of his peacekeeping mission, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy flew to Grozny, who, in the consistency of his views, could compete with President Yeltsin himself.

Just yesterday, the main "liberal" of Russia, splashing saliva, as usual, yelled hysterically that there was nothing for the deputies to go to Dudayev and buy Russian soldiers from him like sheep in the market. But, apparently, convinced by wise advisers, he decided that it would be nice to earn a little political capital on the joint stupidity of domestic intelligence services, the government and the Ministry of Defense.

Zhirinovsky was going to Grozny, and the President flew to Budapest, in an extremely belligerent mood. All the horoscopes presented to him by the astrological department of the Security Service indicated that it was December 1994, according to the state of the sun, moon and planets, that key month of the second half of the century, when decisive steps taken would automatically return Russia to the status of a great power and elevate it even higher than the deceased The Soviet Union to the fear of enemies, both external, whose name is legion, and internal, of which there are even more. The president was in a belligerent mood. Threatening the West to replace the Cold War with a cold peace, Yeltsin spoke out in the sharpest terms against plans for the former satellites of the USSR under the crumbling Warsaw Pact to join NATO and, finally, recalled that Russia would like to quickly receive the six billion dollars that the International Monetary Fund promised it. Otherwise, he promised, democratic reforms in Russia could stop.

While President Yeltsin was frightening the West with the abolition of democracy in Russia and the prospect of a cold peace, Defense Minister Grachev flew to Mozdok. In an interview before departure, he admitted that Grozny was "bombed by Russian planes", pointing out that their target was "only military installations" and the bombing was "pinpoint". Along the way, it turned out that it was not Khasbulatov and Labazanov who led the storming of Grozny, as one might think, but General Alexander Kotenkov himself, the former head of the Legal Department under the President, who had fallen out of favor since the time of the scandalous case of "General" Yakubovsky, now sitting in the St. Petersburg "Crosses".

While General Grachev was flying to Mozdok, his first deputy and former commander in the glorious times of the Afghan war, General Gromov, is the same Gromov who so effectively led the defeated army from Afghanistan across the border bridge, and he himself crossed this bridge last and on foot to the accompaniment of Rosenbaum's fighting Komsomol songs; unexpectedly issued a sharp statement against the military hysteria around Chechnya, warning with the specter of a new Afghanistan. Everyone has already noticed that relations between the two "Afghan" heroes Gromov and Grachev have long become tense, but General Gromov refused to comment on this issue.

Yegor Gaidar, "the last hope of Russian democracy," again made the following statement that day. Although Gaidar disliked General Gromov no less than Grachev, they said about the same thing. The formidable specter of madness approaching the country has led to the blocking of completely polar forces in attempts to mobilize in the name of preventing a catastrophe. Gaidar directly named the names of those who are responsible for the events taking place in Chechnya. These are Oleg Lobov, Oleg Soskovets, Nikolai Egorov, Sergei Stepashin and Pavel Grachev. The cautious Yegor Timurovich did not name the President, noting only the negative influence of the listed persons on the person of the President.

Government and pro-government newspapers made their contribution to the tensely vibrating environment.

Rossiyskiye Vesti published a stunning discovery by its correspondents: the mayor of the capital, Yuri Luzhkov, relying on the financial support of Most Bank, is preparing an anti-Yeltsin coup. The mayor's office has already created its underground guards and is just waiting for the right moment to seize the Kremlin.

And the newspaper Rossiyskiye Vedomosti openly called for a military coup in the country, but

warned to bet on General Lebed, because he "as is well known, is a representative of the Jewish mafia."

Meanwhile, Dudayev, who was forced to negotiate with the "opposition" who had already fled from Chechnya, flatly refused to do this, calling the "oppositionists" criminals armed by Moscow, but offered negotiations with representatives of the Russian government somewhere in a neutral place. Say, in Vilnius.

Reigning in the country, according to the apt expression of General Lebed, the military-political moronism continued, gaining momentum. Grachev arrived in Mozdok. Grozny is waiting for the beginning of the invasion within 48 hours. The Chechen population leaves the city. The fate of Russian prisoners of war hangs in the balance. Dudayev confirmed his intention to shoot everyone if Grozny was again bombarded from the air.

Both sides were bluffing with no trumps in their hands. But Dudayev clearly looked like a more experienced player than the inconsistent and snarky Russian leaders.

Grigory Yavlinsky, the leader of the so-called "Yabloko" (or "Fuck," as the wit Zhirinovskiy called it) faction in the Duma, called Grozny and offered himself, along with five other members of his faction, as voluntary hostages to Dudayev in exchange for prisoners of war. Yavlinsky was so naive that he tried to convince Dudayev that his appearance in Grozny, Grigory Yavlinsky, would immediately stop all the bombing of Grozny. Such statements are called delusions of grandeur.

Dudayev reluctantly agreed, obviously thinking of something else. He had a meeting with Grachev, which happened about two hours later. A small two-story house in the border village of Sleptsovskaya was cordoned off by the guards of the President of Chechnya, General Dudayev, and the Minister of Defense of Russia, General Grachev. Grachev, according to tradition, was guarded by paratroopers; Dudayev, a special detachment of the Ichkerian Guard, tall handsome men, tied with machine-gun belts. The generals had something to say to each other. It was time to sum up the results of their two years of intense joint activity, as a result of which Grachev had an account of 22 million dollars in Western banks, and General Dudayev had a not very large, but very modern army.

Now it had to be shown that this army was capable of much more than plundering transit trains. (However, these echelons were "transit" only for railway brigades. They were intended for Dudayev and allegedly "robbed", although in reality they were simply unloaded.)

Grachev asked Dudayev how he felt. In the East, you have to be polite. Dudayev replied that since everything in the world depends solely on the will of Allah, he handed over to one of the Western banks some documents that record certain events of the last three years, with a request to make them public in case anything happened to him, Dudayev. will happen. Grachev took note of these words, but noted that the Chechen president looks great: vigorous and healthy. Dudayev again referred to the will of Allah, asking who started all this fuss around Chechnya?

Grachev sincerely replied that he, as a military man, is the same as Dudayev (we are both generals and it is easier for us to understand each other) knows little about politics, considering it a dirty business, but is making efforts so that the army is not drawn into the game of politicians. "And who is bombing Grozny?" asked Dudaev. Grachev laughed: "Is this the bombing?" It's such a joke. If he had commanded... Here the general made a meaningful pause and passed his hand across his throat. Are you laughing, please? By the way, about command. What would Dudayev say if he were offered to command the army somewhere in the Trans-Baikal District as a colonel general? And then he was transferred to the Ministry of Defense by one of

deputies?

Dudaev smiled modestly. He won't be able to lead an army. There is no experience. It's been four years already, count how I passed the division. It will be difficult to enter the structure again. And why? He's fine here too. There is no one between him and Allah now: neither the commander of the district, nor the minister, nor the general secretary. Easier to work.

Grachev hardened his face. How to explain to Dudayev that it is not his order to sit in such a post and on such money. "Perestroika" was not done for this, so that unknown generals would sit in the posts intended for the former first secretaries, and the first secretaries would chant in the Kremlin.

I would at least look around: in Baku Aliiev, in Tbilisi Shevardnadze, in North Ossetia Galazov, in Tatarstan Shaimiev. True, there are still exceptions like Ilyumzhinov, who became president straight from the stalls, but he sits quietly and sends almost all the money to Moscow in order not to be touched. Especially after October 93rd.

I would agree, Grachev continued to insist. When I was appointed Minister of Defense, I also thought that I could not cope. And nothing. Did it.

And he did a very good job, Dudayev confirmed, smiling. If they offered me the post of Minister of Defense, I might have thought. I won't join the army. From the presidents of the army to command? Not solid. And where should I go now, when this is happening around. This is where the war starts.

—

No one is going to fight," Grachev sighed. —

Hand over the prisoners and agree to negotiations. That's all the problems.

—

I am ready to negotiate, - said Dudayev

. - You do not want .

"We cannot negotiate with you," Grachev corrected. —

Negotiating with you means recognizing Chechnya as independent. Don't you understand it? No one in Moscow today is ready for this. This means to recognize the beginning of the collapse of Russia after the Union. We will be torn apart. Negotiate with Khadzhiiev, with Avturkhanov. Who else is there?

—

Labazanov, - prompted Dudayev, -

whom you promoted to colonel.

—

I didn't produce it," Grachev laughed. —

It was you who released him from prison and appointed him to command almost his own guards. So he made himself a colonel. I just keep quiet. If a person wants to be a colonel, let him be .

- Well, so how?

- What how? Dudayev asked.

—

As for negotiations with Khadzhiev," Grachev smiled.

I can't negotiate with him," Dudayev shook his head. —

I will be torn to pieces in Grozny if I start talking to these scoundrels. Let's do it this way: let those who consider themselves offended come to me. Not necessarily here. You can meet somewhere in the Baltics, Cyprus or Turkey. Let's talk. Maybe we can agree. Why wave your fists? Do you think that anyone is seriously afraid of you now?

—

As you know," Grachev sighed. —

I will, of course. They just won't agree. Who in Cyprus put Interpol on the ears?

—

Do they think I am? - Dudayev was surprised

.- Why should I?

—

And who else could, - Grachev shook his head. —

Only you, Johar. This is not good .

The admiring generals came out to the journalists. Grachev, obviously flirting in front of the cameras, said:

"We spoke frankly, like a general with a general. We decided this: first, the transfer of prisoners, then we'll see how things go." Grachev paused and added:

"The most important thing we agreed on is that there WILL BE NO WAR!" And the generals exchanged a strong and honest soldier's handshake...

Spiteful critics and envious people, whom Grachev divorced like cockroaches in a food store after his appointment as Minister of Defense, claimed that the minister, while studying at the Academy, constantly slept at lectures. Field exercises, they say, loved, but the theory of military art all overslept. All this was, if not slander, then a clear exaggeration. General Grachev knew the theory. Maybe a little worse than Clausewitz, but the times were different. He knew perfectly well that in carrying out an invasion anywhere, whether on foreign territory or on one's own, it was necessary to achieve tactical surprise. To do this, there is only one way to assure the enemy that there will be no war, or to draw him into tedious negotiations, in the midst of which to strike. As the Japanese did to the Americans in 1941. Or the Germans are with us in the same year. Therefore, the phrase said by Grachev to the whole world: "WAR WILL NOT BE!" was only a demonstration that the general did not sleep at lectures at the Academy. And nothing else.

However, Dudayev did not entertain any illusions. If up to a certain moment he still hoped that the new democratic Russia would not dare to unleash in front of the eyes of the whole world



full-scale war on his own territory, then in the past few days he has received enough information from his "sources in Grachev's entourage and the structures of the Russian General Staff that Moscow most definitely intends to invade Chechnya. At the same time, all the military units involved for this purpose, mainly, of course, from the North Caucasian Military District are not at all oriented towards any kind of war. They seem to be attached to assist the police forces (for 3-4 days, a maximum of a week), to help disarm several bandit groups. It was a little confusing. It turned out that by misinforming public opinion in the country and the world, the Kremlin misinformed its own army, which, disoriented in this way, would suffer monstrous losses, transferring the conflict to a completely different

plane.

What is the purpose of Moscow, starting such an operation?

General Dudayev had a powerful and quite modern intelligence, structurally entering the Department of State Security, headed by Ruslan Gelishanov. Grozny was well aware of the situation in Russia. For several years now, Russia, plundered by everyone who is not lazy (including Dudayev himself, together with his Moscow and other partners), has been living in debt, which has already reached an absolutely unpronounceable figure. Miners, the defense industry, the army, not to mention various teachers, doctors and professors, do not receive salaries for months. Almost 40% of the population is already living below the poverty line, approaching the poverty line. Acute social problems are engulfing a huge power like a chip in the ocean! As they say, it's time for a little war! Perhaps, having invaded Chechnya, declare that it was she who was to blame for the fact that all the reforms in Russia were going like drunks through the impenetrable mud of some collective farm street.

All this was confusing and unsettling in its sheer surrealism.

A thorough analysis of the situation gave another more or less plausible solution: the invasion of Chechnya theoretically provided Boris Yeltsin with the opportunity to declare a state of emergency throughout the country, cancel elections under the guise and trample on those pathetic sprouts of democracy that managed to break through the reinforced concrete blocks of supposedly collapsed totalitarianism in 4 years ..

And in Moscow, near the Duma building, the sadly solemn melody of "Farewell of the Slav" is pouring. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy returned from Grozny, having rescued two more captured soldiers from Dudayev and demonstrates them to the "most respectable public" to musical accompaniment and an incendiary speech.

Yavlinsky arrived in Grozny with his comrades in the faction, who offered themselves as voluntary hostages in exchange for prisoners. Dudayev did not accept the sacrifice of a candidate for the future presidents of Russia. He announced that he would hand over 14 prisoners and 4 corpses of killed soldiers to the deputies of the Lithuanian Seimas. The deputies have already arrived in Moscow, where they were detained by order of the Russian Foreign Ministry, preventing them from reaching Grozny. Thinking, Dudayev waved his hand and granted Yavlinsky as many as seven prisoners and four coffins, which Yavlinsky delivered to Moscow the next day.

The next day was December 7th. The American dollar, sensing the psychosis that had begun in the country, was steadily going up, having already reached 3292 rubles.

Among the prisoners delivered by Yavlinsky, the famous captain Rusakov, "a veteran of civil wars," as the newspapers called him, stood out in particular. Dudayev left seven people to himself "to ensure the security of Chechnya", which once again testifies to some naivety of the general. After all, he had over 200,000 Russian residents in Grozny alone. The number of corpses of its own citizens could never stop Moscow on its way to

greatness.

The arrival of Yavlinsky with seven more prisoners (everyone somehow forgot about the coffins) heated up the situation in the Duma. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who did not understand the full significance of the events in time, now, trying to make up for lost time, threw another tantrum, blaming General Grachev for everything that had happened, under whose command an indescribable mess reigned in the Armed Forces of the country.

In addition, Zhirinovskiy obtained information somewhere that 50 surviving Russian soldiers were then shot by the "opposition" for the unsuccessful assault on Grozny.

The famous deputy Nevzorov (from St. Petersburg) who then spoke belligerently called for a march on Grozny. At one time, he did everything possible to rewind from military service in the Soviet army. Even "mowed" under the psycho in the hospital Skvortsova - Stepanov. Now he was ready, having gorged himself on Duma bread, to fight to the last drop of blood. Of course, not yours. But Shurik Nevzorov "lobbied" not for the army, but for the FSK. According to old memory, when I went to the KGB agents.

Therefore, he furiously clung to Yushenkov and "other democrats", who, rescuing soldiers and officers from Dudayev's captivity, put his own organs in a completely idiotic position. However, the "organs" themselves, throughout their history in a similar, and sometimes even worse, situation, this was far from new and, frankly, they did not need any protection from Nevzorov at all. It's just that Nevzorov himself really wanted to demonstrate the high trust that he was given. In order to protect his patrons from any attacks in the future, Nevzorov demanded the removal of "democrats" from all Duma posts, one way or another connected with the defense and security of the country.

Before Nevzorov had time to shut up, Zhirinovskiy again broke through to the microphone, still not cooled down from the impressions associated with the trip to Grozny. He announced that he had just received accurate information about what was happening in Chechnya. There, the CIA and Massad clashed in mortal combat.

However, this did not cause a sensation, since the CIA and Massad had already begun to be treated as something completely normal on the territory of Russia. How is Russia without the CIA and Massad? This just doesn't happen. And the fact that the sinister partners suddenly fought because of General Dudayev did not look very believable.

Instead, someone suggested hearing Dudayev himself in the Duma, inviting him to the next meeting.

To this, the leader of the National Socialists in the Duma, Nikolai Lysenko, yelled that there was nothing to listen to here, "the possessed Chechen Fuhrer." Lysenko considered himself the only Fuhrer and did not need any competitors at all.

The situation of insanity reigning in parliament was so obvious that even Anatoly Lukyanov, a deputy from the Communist Party, recently released from Lefortovo under an amnesty, gloomily remarked that in Russia "the power of renegades has been replaced by the power of degenerates" and was right in his own way. His subtle poetic nature felt falsehood very well.

Meanwhile, the coffins with dead Russian soldiers brought by Yavlinsky from Grozny were refused to be accepted by the Ministry of Defense, demanding proof that the dead were servicemen. The car with the "load 200" stood all day at the tightly closed gates of the Burdenko Central Military Hospital, where they did not want to listen to anything, demanding countless information. The deputies ran all day through the authorities. They were sent to the Minister of Defense, whom no one could find. Nobody could find Grachev because the minister

was in the Kremlin, where the Presidential Security Council finally met.

First of all, they listened to the Minister of Defense, who had recently returned from the Caucasus, where he met with Dudayev himself. The Minister of Defense reported that Dudayev had rejected all the proposals made to him (to become the commander of one of the Far Eastern Russian armies from the presidents of the Chechen Republic) and, apparently, one can only speak with him in the language of force. The President asked if Grachev had everything ready for "restoring constitutional order" in Chechnya. Grachev, who recently publicly swore that one airborne regiment and two hours of time was enough for him to restore order in Chechnya, answered in the affirmative. Instead of one regiment, he had already pulled three divisions to the borders of Chechnya, including one tank division, and believed that he had no reason to worry. The President asked how many days the army and the Interior Ministry are going to complete the operation. Grachev prudently did not mention the promised two hours.

—

Can you do it in a week? the president asked. —

And then, you know, the noise can rise. You asked for 10 days.?

Nine, Yeltsin said firmly. —

I won't give anymore.

Nikolai Yegorov, appointed governor, who had been congratulated the day before on his promotion to deputy prime minister, reported to the audience that Dudayev, apart from about 500 armed bandits, had absolutely no social base in Chechnya. It is assumed that with the beginning of the entry of troops into the territory of Chechnya, Dudayev and his accomplices will leave for hard-to-reach mountainous areas and there ...

- And there, - put in Grachev, -

we will already work with aviation in full. Not Ermolov's times.

But," Yegorov continued, nodding his head demonstrating full agreement with the remark of the Minister of Defense, "nevertheless, he doubts that it is possible to restore the Constitutional legal order in full in Chechnya. Someone who knows it. At one time he was a district police officer in the Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories, then he supervised the work of the internal affairs bodies in the party structures and can rightly say that the Chechens are a nation of criminals. He does not want to quote here on this subject people who have been revered in Russia at all times as national heroes and profound thinkers. General Yermolov, for example. Or Comrade Stalin. Therefore, in order to finally solve the problem of this territory, it must somehow be freed from the population now living there. Of course, he does not mean extermination or deportation, as was done in the old days, but the natural creation of such conditions that would let the population itself understand that living in this region is impossible. Therefore, the army and the special units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and OMON following it should behave in such a way as to cause the local population to spontaneous protest with the adoption of the most severe, he is not afraid of this word, punitive measures. In the course of these measures, settlements, religious and other monuments should be destroyed. And much more. Today we are talking about the very existence of Russia, about its security and future. And the provision of such categories has always required sacrifice.

The President sat with the look of a bear raised from a den in the middle of winter. Everyone was silent, waiting to hear a formidable roar.

"In order to carry out all these measures," the Minister for Nationalities continued meanwhile, "

the territory of Chechnya is completely isolated from the outside world by the forces of the army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Entry and exit are subject to the strictest security clearances, as stipulated by the emergency and martial law. The flight of the population will be presented to the outside world as the consequences of the atrocities of the Dudayev regime.

The President was silent.

"But what are we going to do with ours?" Interior Minister Yerin asked. His face expressed readiness to do whatever he was ordered to do.

Oleg Soskovets, as always sedately and unhurriedly, got up and presented his proposals. From the moment the operation began, plus or minus a few days, it is necessary to start exchanging 50,000th bills throughout the country and do all this in such a way that the population would have no time to think about anything other than saving their own savings. Part of the so-called "democratic" press can be openly accused of being funded by Dudayev. Let them prove otherwise. And on this basis, the licenses of some publishing houses should be taken away, and, simply speaking, closed. As for the State Duma and the Federation Council, firstly, it is necessary at the last moment to warn and, more importantly, carefully instruct the chairmen of the chambers, Shumeiko and Rybkin, how they should interpret the events and what to say about this.

At the same time, at the same time as the start of the operation (or a little earlier), special communications are cut off for some chairmen of the Duma committees and individual deputies. In addition, within the framework of the law on the state of emergency on part of the Russian territory, in accordance with the secret decree of the President of November 30, it is possible to temporarily (until further notice) cancel the law on the press, public organizations, rallies and demonstrations altogether. From the territory of Chechnya to the mass media to transmit messages that have passed government verification, if you want censorship. Soskovets noted that he did not see any major complications in Russia proper after the start of events in Chechnya.

Then the floor was taken by Secretary of the Security Council Oleg Lobov, a former major party leader from Yekaterinburg when Yeltsin was the first secretary of the regional committee there. Yeltsin valued Lobov for his personal devotion and broad-mindedness, which allowed him to operate on a grand scale "from Japan to England", as was sung in a popular song of the Stalin era. Now Lobov had to voice the essence of the analytical note, born in the bowels of the think tank of the service of General Korzhakov.

The note, as expected, began with an introductory part, which stated the extremely dangerous situation in which Russia fell after the collapse of the USSR. The influence of the country in the world is steadily declining, traditional regions are being lost, where no one would even think to challenge the influence of the Soviet Union. In particular, in the countries of the former Warsaw Pact and in many developing countries, for example, Angola. Russia is no longer considered because it is believed to be weak.

There is nothing more dangerous, the analytical note pointed out, than actually declared state weakness. This sets in motion forces directed both against Russian interests and against Russian statehood. In this regard, a particularly dangerous situation has developed in the south of Russia and beyond its borders.

The first chapter of the note was called "Dangerous hotbeds of separatism", but for some reason began with the revival of the ideas of pan-Turkism, emphasizing that the inspirers of pan-Turkist ideas are almost without exception people from the former republics of the USSR and Russian

autonomies that ended up in Turkey for one reason or another. In Turkey, whose empire collapsed at the end of the First World War, imperial traditions not only have not weakened, but, on the contrary, are gaining strength from year to year. Even in school textbooks, maps of the country are published according to the situation in 1586, where vast areas lost by the Turks during the countless Russian-Turkish wars are still listed as "lost territories" that need to be returned. And painted in the appropriate color. These regions include the entire Caucasus, most of the Astrakhan region, Tatarstan, the Crimea and part of Kalmykia, not to mention the vast territories along the banks of the Danube. There is no doubt that as Russia further weakens and condones separatism on its territory, these forces in Turkey, Iran and other countries may move to more active actions in order to seize vast areas from Russia, which may ultimately lead to complete disintegration. and the death of the Russian state.

The next section was almost entirely devoted to Chechnya. The situation that developed in the Chechen Republic after 1991 provokes instability throughout not only Russia, but also all CIS countries. While it is possible to keep pro-Russian people in leadership positions in a number of autonomies, the situation, fraught with any surprises, will nevertheless remain under control in the future. However, in the event that some politician comes to power, not brought up in the old spirit of party discipline and amenable to separatist propaganda, the situation can become explosive and practically uncontrollable. Tatarstan was cited as an example, declaring its full sovereignty and those difficult negotiations that had to be conducted with Shaimiev in order to somehow defuse the situation. Further, an analysis was given of the situation in practically all Russian autonomies from Yakutia to Chuvashia, with special emphasis, of course, on the numerous autonomies of the North Caucasian region. Nowhere was the situation considered satisfactory. From almost all autonomies, secret emissaries were sent to Dudayev to exchange experience. Everyone is closely following the developments in Chechnya with the clear intention of acting like a dashing aviation general when Russia finally signs off on its own impotence. Analysts linked the situation in Chechnya to the uncompromising position of Ukraine in everything that concerned, for example, the Crimea and the division of the Black Sea Fleet, with the behavior of Moldova in relation to Tiraspol and Moscow, with the arrogant position of Azerbaijan and the growing self-conceit of President Nazarbayev.

Chechnya compromises Russia in the international arena, causing, to put it mildly, bewilderment among the G7 countries, as well as among developing countries. Any attempt by Russia to intervene in any world problems leads to the answer: "You first put things in order in your house."

In the section of recommendations arising from the current situation, it was stated in clear text that a quick and complete military victory in Chechnya would show that Russia was and remains a great power that will not allow anyone to violate its territorial integrity or dictate any conditions. This victory will cool the Turks, Iranians, Afghans and even the Chinese, showing them that they can be treated accordingly if necessary.

But the action in Chechnya will serve as an even greater lesson for the impudent Baltic states, for the self-assured Ukraine, for the former first secretaries of the Central Asian republics who have become presidents for life. Let them understand that every next minute they can act just as quickly and decisively with them.

An equally important lesson will be taught to the population of Russia, demonstrating to them in detail the strength and determination of the authorities, who go to any lengths to protect the Russian population, the indivisibility and greatness of the country. A short and victorious war will rally society around the President and significantly raise his somewhat fallen rating, ensuring victory in the next presidential election.

The President listened attentively and with genuine interest. He knew that Lobov was speaking from a note drawn up by Korzhakov's analysts, and he was impressed by the logic and cruel truth of what was presented, along with the simplicity and some elegance of the literary presentation. The only problem was that all the speakers had already referred to the secret decree of November 30, but the advisers had already managed to convince the President that it was not only impossible to act within the framework of this decree, but also quite dangerous.

To begin with, it is impossible to legally declare a state of emergency and martial law on the territory of Chechnya, because the first is declared at the request of local authorities, and the second only in case of aggression from outside.

In addition, the decree of November 30 gave all power in Chechnya into the hands of Grachev, which, due to new circumstances, should not have been done either.

The fact is that while in Budapest at the OSCE meeting, Yeltsin, on behalf of Russia, signed the "Code of Conduct Concerning the Military-Political Aspects of Security." In the Zbm paragraph of the Code, in particular, it was said:

"Each participating State will ensure that any decision to send its armed forces to perform internal security functions is taken in accordance with constitutional procedures. Such decisions will determine the tasks assigned to the armed forces and will ensure that these tasks are carried out under the effective control of constitutionally established authorities and in accordance with the principles of the rule of law.

In the event that internal security functions cannot be performed without the use of force, each participating State will ensure that its use is commensurate with the existing need for enforcement action.

THE ARMED FORCES ARE OBLIGED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO AVOID DAMAGE TO CIVILIANS AND THEIR PROPERTY."

Therefore, the President ordered that a secret decree be drawn up to repeal the secret decree of 30 November and that a new secret decree be drawn up, the draft of which was presented to the members of the Security Council.

In the new decree, the "group" entrusted with restoring order in Chechnya was no longer called the "Group for leading actions to disarm and eliminate armed groups, introduce and maintain a state of emergency", but

"Group for the management of actions to ensure the rule of law, law and order and public safety, disarmament and liquidation of armed formations not provided for by federal legislation" .

All references to the state of emergency were carefully removed from the text of the new decree, as well as references to the law of the RSFSR "On the state of emergency" and to Article 88 of the Constitution, which provides for the possibility of introducing such a provision.

The overall leadership of the "Group" in the draft of the new decree was assigned not to Grachev, as in the old one, but to the most ardent supporter of the invasion of Chechnya by military force, Nikolai Yegorov. He was also appointed "Chairman for the Coordination of the Civil Federal Group." And General Grachev this time was appointed "Chairman for the Coordination of the Military Group."

But on the other hand, Minister of Emergency Situations Sergei Shoigu was added to the new Group, whose units were supposed to ensure the "evacuation" of the population from the disaster zone caused by hostilities.

It must be said that few of those present at the meeting of this memorable Security Council under the President of Russia understood all these Yeltsin sophistication. Since the presidential "wise men" believe that it is necessary to do this, and not that, in essence, this changes. Let Yegorov lead if he's so smart. No difference. Most importantly, when do we start? One of General Korzhakov's assistants, General Ragozin, was urgently summoned to the meeting. In the old days, while serving in the 5th Directorate of the KGB, Ragozin, by the will of fate, ended up in a department that oversaw various underground and semi-underground "ufologists", "psychics", "astrologers" and "sorcerers" so that, God forbid, they would not harm their witchcraft of some harm to the beloved party. As a result, Ragozin gained such knowledge from his wards that he is currently in charge of a whole department of astrologers and psychics who have made a cozy nest for themselves under the wing of the President's security service, as at the court of a medieval king. Every morning, General Ragozin reported to the President his horoscope for the current day. The horoscope was endorsed by General Korzhakov. Without his visa, he had no strength. Back in November, the department headed by General Ragozin received the task to indicate the optimal date for the start of the Chechen operation. Calculations of the position of stars and planets were carried out using the latest generation of American computers, purchased specifically for this purpose by the Kremlin commandant, General Barsukov.

All calculations showed December 11 as the most favorable date for the start of the operation.

The head of the FSK Stepashin, quickly counting the days, correctly determined that December 11, 1994 falls on a Sunday, that is, a day off. And it is known from history that all sudden strikes, as a rule, were delivered on Sundays, when the enemy was resting. The fact that Friday has long been a day off in Chechnya, none of those present either knew, or knew, but forgot ...

December 8th was a sad day. They commemorated the third anniversary of the sudden death of the Soviet Union. A few rallies under the Red Banners gathered under the wet snow. On one of the squares in the capital, Deputy Marychev, together with notorious people's leaders from former officials of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, hammered aspen stakes into the symbolic coffins of Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich, the main signatories of the Belovezhskaya Agreement, which declared the death of the USSR.

The Communists in the Duma tried once again to denounce the Belovezhskaya agreement. The surviving admirers of the mystical teachings of Marx-Lenin always believed that they could handle everything up to the revival of the dead.

The Rossiyskiye Vesti newspaper, founded by the presidential administration, published an article under the heading "Stupidity or a dress rehearsal?" in which it tried to analyze the recent events related to the security service of General Korzhakov, who attacked the capital's mayor's office and the Most bank. The newspaper asked a reasonable question: if Korzhakov's people behaved so impudently and with impunity in the very center of Moscow, then why can't they just as easily isolate the President, making him a hostage of their own decisions and actions?

In unison with the newspaper article, a more than strange report was broadcast on TV channels by Vladimir Kondratiev, the own correspondent of RTR and NTV in Germany, one of the most experienced TV journalists who have been working in Germany since the time immemorial of Soviet times. Kondratiev's text was completely innocent. The TV reporter said that

Due to dilapidation, Germany is expected to dismantle the monument to Soviet soldiers who died during the capture of Berlin in 1945. At the same time, the municipality of the city undertakes to complete the repair by the upcoming 50th anniversary of the victory. Kondratiev expressed doubt that by this date the repair could be completed even for purely financial reasons.

At the same time, everyone could see the following picture on the screen, apparently taken from some closed archive and sent to television for a nationwide demonstration. President Yeltsin and the commander of the Western Group of Forces, Colonel General Matvey Burlakov, came out to the monument, around which, on some solemn occasion, a guard of honor was built.

At the same time, the President was in such an "inadequate" state, as it is customary to put it diplomatically, that, having difficulty standing on his feet, he stood with his back to the monument, while General Burlakov stood at attention, putting his hand to the visor to the monument with his face. The adjutants, who came to their senses, turned the President to face the monument, and he froze in some kind of ridiculous pose, arching his back and sticking out his chest. All this time, the melodic and familiar patter of Vladimir Kondratyev was flowing that the fate of our military monuments in Germany was now completely given over to the financial arbitrariness of the German government ...

Meanwhile, the number of troops concentrated on the border with Chechnya reaches a critical mass. Central television broadcasts a parade in Grozny of "warriors of Allah", declared foreign mercenaries. A column of tanks is crawling across Sheikh Mansur Square, adorned with the green banners of Ichkeria as a free wolf, ready to snatch its independence from anyone with its terrible fangs.

Grachev, Erin and Stepashin were summoned to the Duma for a report, but none of them, of course, appeared, demonstrating to all doubters what the representative power of democratic Russia is worth.

However, stubborn journalists again caught General Grachev and asked him a purely rhetorical question: "How do weapons and mercenaries get into Chechnya now?"

"Ask Nikolaev," the Minister of Defense replied with a thin smile.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Border Troops, Colonel-General Nikolaev, was a longtime rival and foe of General Grachev, many predicted him to be future defense ministers. When the border troops were withdrawn from the KGB system and made independent, Grachev several times wanted to lay his ministerial paw on them. But General Nikolaev fiercely resisted. Relations between the generals deteriorated so completely that, as in the wise Ukrainian proverb, the forelocks of all subordinates crackled. The border guards could wage an unequal battle for two days with the superior forces of the Afghan and Tajik partisans, and the nearby tank unit of the Ministry of Defense did not even declare a state of alarm. That is, it didn't blow in the mustache.

In turn, the army unit could be attacked from the rear in the area where, as it was believed, the border was completely locked, and then guess "how did the bandits manage to seep into this area?"

But in this case, Grachev clearly got excited. Although at all meetings from the ministerial level to the presidential level Chechnya was already spoken of as a foreign state, the border guards of General Nikolaev were not yet on the borders of Ichkeria. But soon they will stand up, thus marking the state border of Russia, as stated in all the charters and instructions of the border troops.

With pleasure, having put General Nikolaev under fire from the media, Grachev began to gather in Mozdok. He had a lot of his own problems to deal with other people's. One of these problems was the same that the Americans faced,



trying to figure out where Chechnya is. THE RUSSIAN ARMY DID NOT HAVE DETAILED MAP OF THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC.

It was rumored that they were all abandoned either in Grozny or in Bamut during the hasty withdrawal of former Soviet troops from there. Unit commanders up to and including battalion commanders were given tourist maps issued at one time in Stavropol, and atlases of roads of the former USSR. To get a little bearing on the terrain. Approximately 75% of settlements and more than half of the roads available in Chechnya were not on the maps. Naturally, swampy and completely impassable areas, oil and gas pipelines, power lines and many other things were not indicated, which constituted (and constitutes) military and state secrets in cartography. After all, no one ever thought that keeping these secrets would hurt their own army so hard, which would have to fight by touch.

But the lack of "strategic maps of Chechnya" was not the only problem of General Grachev. Journalists, even those who sympathized with him, have long called the Russian Defense Minister "Minister of all-round defense."

From the moment of his appointment to this post in 1992, Grachev really kept all-round defense. First, he was an upstart, and upstarts are not liked in all the armies of the world. Secondly, he was a paratrooper and took a place that, according to a tradition dating back to tsarist times, always belonged to combined arms (in other words, infantry) generals and marshals. Thirdly, the time was such that a general, even with more service and life experience than Grachev, could hardly have effectively controlled such a complex, cumbersome and poorly controlled machine, called the former Soviet armed forces, at such times. During the 50 post-war years, these forces were targeted for the world war, undergoing appropriate training.

The defeat in Afghanistan, the collapse of the entire western front, which for decades stood in a huge arc from Germany to Hungary, and, finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union led (and could not help but lead) the Armed Forces of the country into a state of complete chaos. The fleet was dying before our eyes, the aviation units were almost three times forced to reduce the number of flight hours. Many compounds that found themselves on the ruins of the empire in the form of a dozen independent and pseudo-independent states simply ceased to exist. The gigantic combined-arms groups practically ceased to exist. Deprived of their former funds, barely 50% manned, mixed with units withdrawn from Europe, abandoned in an open field along with rusting equipment, combined arms armies, corps and divisions actually stopped combat training of personnel, turning into huge joint-stock companies with a slave-owning bias.

With gigantic difficulty, it was possible to maintain at the same level, as it seemed, only the elite units: the airborne troops, the marines, several former KGB special units transferred to the subordination of the army, and, of course, the strategic missile forces as the last memory of the former imperial greatness. Most of the huge Soviet generals, after the Minister of Defense Marshal Yazov and the commander of the ground forces, General of the Army Varennikov, got behind prison bars, and the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Moiseev, was transferred to the reserve, left the service, but not because they admitted defeat, but because, that they did not want to serve the "temporary occupation regime," as they called the government of President Yeltsin. Unwilling to serve the new regime, they, of course, did everything possible to ensure that this regime, if not overthrown, then destabilize it to such an extent that it collapsed on its own.

All sorts of "Unions of Officers", "Unions of Veterans" and similar organizations decomposed the army day and night. And not that huge, gray and faceless combined arms mass, but precisely those elite troops that still retained their former combat effectiveness. In part

not only representatives of Zhirinovsky's controlled party, but also Barkashov's fascist agitators were allowed in without hindrance, not to mention numerous other parties of an openly nationalist and extremist persuasion that declared themselves patriotic.

In parts of the Far East and some other districts, openly (with the official permission of the command) cells of the "Russian National Cathedral", headed by the former KGB general Sterligov, were created.

Even the Orthodox clergy, who often joined the troops, spoke more about the worldwide Jewish conspiracy and the "Jewish yoke" that destroyed Holy Rus' than about saving the soul. All this pressure was directed specifically against President Yeltsin in the first place and General Grachev in the second.

Hoping for the work of the Special Sections, as in the old days, was ridiculous. Special departments were among the first to muddy the waters in the army, mourning the old days of the omnipotence of the KGB. Grachev could not even count on the understanding of his own deputies and the chief of the general staff, all of whom, in one way or another, fronted, to put it mildly.

Everyone saw how long General Grachev hesitated before he openly came out on the side of President Yeltsin during the October 1993 coup. And the first, of course, was the President himself.

Once upon a time, the totalitarian Soviet system rested on three pillars: the party, cobbled together by its founder according to the canons of a gangster group, and its two combat units: the army and the KGB. The party vanished, leaving their combat units to fend for themselves.

The October events showed Yeltsin how little he could count on the army, and the conducted secret investigation also showed how close to open rebellion were precisely the elite units propagated by the enemies of the President from Moscow to distant seas. If this did not happen, then the reason was rather not loyalty to the President, but the cowardice of some high-ranking generals, who were not entirely sure of the outcome of the Chilean version of saving the fatherland.

Grachev therefore retained his post because he was a paratrooper and enjoyed authority precisely in the airborne units, since he commanded them back in Soviet times. And the current commander-in-chief of the Airborne Forces, Colonel-General Podkolzin, although he was Grachev's protege, intrigued against Grachev, like the captain of the royal musketeers against the cardinal. The country did not understand its Middle Ages.

And Grachev's hesitations alone would be enough for the President to understand how little he can count on the Armed Forces in the event of another rebellion on the model of Khasbulatov. Even less, he could count on the frankly slender FSK, headed by Sergei. Stepashin, promoted by Yeltsin from colonel to lieutenant general. Evil tongues called Stepashin a "fireman", which was completely untrue.

Stepashin was never a fireman, but was a political worker in the Leningrad fire department and even defended his Ph.D. thesis on "The role of party organizations in increasing the combat readiness of fire fighting units."

When the October events devoured two security ministers at once: Barannikov and Galushko, Yeltsin appointed Stepashin to this post, perhaps counting on his personal loyalty not without reason.

But as they say, "a helpful fool is more dangerous than an enemy." Stepashin turned out to be completely

incompetent in this position, therefore he supplied all presidential and government structures with misinformation, which was sometimes obscenely obvious. It was not the malicious intent of the FSK director. He reported what was reported to him, having no way to check or double-check the incoming data. And the subordinates lied to him with great pleasure, impatiently waiting for the next boss to be removed from them. They have already changed 5 in four years.

The former KGB, whose employees took a special oath to die for the Soviet Union and the CPSU, reacted to the death of the country and his native party surprisingly sluggish. Both the coups of August and October, the huge monster sat with his tentacles tucked under him with sleepily closed eyes. No one was able to get any intelligible information from him. Part of the former KGB officers went underground, from where they launched the red terror against the resurgent class of entrepreneurs and bankers, acting on the scale of the Lenin-Stalin era and without any risk, since the "brothers" who remained in the Lubyanka were not at all going to catch them, fully sharing the proletarian hatred of their former colleagues in proof of the unfading ideas of barracks socialism, during which they had power and privileges unthinkable in any other social environment.

In the October events of 1993, they all rushed to the defense of the White House, relying on the promise of Khasbulatov-Rutskoy to lead them all back to a brighter future. After the failure of the adventure, they fled: romantics through the system of underground communications, the plan of which, as everyone remembers, was not found by any of the state structures (just as the Ministry of Defense did not find a plan for Moscow); the pragmatists came out through the front entrances, waving their hands to the Korzhakov cordon, which also consisted of their former colleagues. And everyone vowed to personally take revenge on President Yeltsin, promising to kill him along with his entire family.

If we add to all this that another special service, the GRU, trained special forces for Dudayev at its secret bases and advised his senior officers, [6] it becomes absolutely clear why President Yeltsin preferred to hide behind the Kremlin walls and the broad shoulders of his personal bodyguard.

Unable to finally disband all the power and counterintelligence structures, which turned out to be literally concreted into the communist state system that Yeltsin inherited from the late Soviet Union, the President did not come up with anything better than creating parallel power structures of power and control. At the same time, he did not at all think about the fact that by this he was returning the country to the early European Middle Ages, when the kings fought, taking up all-round defense, with rebellious cities, rebellious parliaments and rebellious feudal lords, each of which had its own armed forces and special services.

The President, under the circumstances, could entrust a parallel security service to only one person, General Korzhakov, his faithful and longtime bodyguard, who had more than once proved his selfless devotion to Yeltsin personally. In fact, only Korzhakov and the commandant of the Kremlin, Barsukov, did not betray the President (even with hesitation) during the days of the Khasbulatov rebellion.

The choice of the President would be ideal, if not for one significant circumstance. General Korzhakov began his service in the 9th Directorate of the KGB under the command of Generals Plekhanov and Generalov (both went to jail after the August coup of 1991). The generals put the matter of educating the personnel of the department, which supplied bodyguards to dignitaries and guards at special facilities of state and defense importance (including summer cottages) in such a way that it was forbidden for the officers of the "nine" to think in the most categorical way. And it was absolutely right. All thoughts and reflexes of the bodyguard, brought to the fullest automatism, must be directed

solely on concern for the safety of the "body" that is entrusted to him. As soon as, say, the famous General Medvedev, the head of the security of the President of the USSR Gorbachev, began to think, he immediately betrayed his boss and, together with the nuclear case, defected to the putschists.

Therefore, when General Korzhakov, accustomed to opening and closing the doors of presidential limousines, holding an umbrella over the President, soaring his master in a bathhouse and sharing with him all the other hardships and deprivations of the presidential position, was also ordered to think about state security in general, the results surpassed all expectations of those who created a similar situation.

The scheme of state security developed by General Korzhakov, of course, was at first glance simple and even promised to be very effective. The security of the state is the security of the President. A similar scheme was once developed for Comrade Stalin and led to the mass extermination of his own people, since he (the people) quite obviously fraught with a threat to the safety of the leader by the very fact of his existence.

The current scheme could not lead to anything else either.

If Comrade Stalin was always right by definition, then President Yeltsin was always right by the Constitution, which he managed to pass in the post-October days, when the entire Russian society had not yet recovered from the thunder of tank guns in its own capital. This Constitution gave the President, and therefore General Korzhakov, as much power as the kings did not have in the short historical period of absolutism. And, most importantly, it did not provide for any liability, since it was almost impossible to legally remove the President from power, although such a procedure was provided for by the Constitution.

As expected, General Korzhakov began to interpret the security of the President very broadly. The security of the President, for example, depended on import quotas for oil or, say, on the income of Rosvooruzhenie, and therefore, General Korzhakov believed, both of these industrial monsters should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the presidential guard.

The security of the President, no doubt, also depended on what the press and the people dared to report about him. The security of the President also depends on his rating, which was constantly falling.

And it goes without saying that the main danger for the President was the army, which thought for a very long time when it was required to cover the President with their bodies from the malicious claims of the rebellious Supreme Council. Therefore, the army needed to be occupied with business, so that from idleness and a beggarly existence it would not begin to solve its problems on its own. Moreover, to occupy in such a way that both the army itself and everyone around understand what it is worth, including the elite units. Even "not including", but in the first place.

Decaying from idleness and the subconscious understanding that the death of the USSR came from its complete uselessness, the army became doubly dangerous, because the stock of aggressive energy accumulated in it did not at all correspond to the level of its combat training.

Unfortunately, the current geopolitical situation in the world completely ruled out the possibility of using the army anywhere outside the country. Therefore, the situation in Chechnya suddenly became just a gift for everyone who thought about the safety of their President, including himself. Of course, the President himself was most interested in his own security.

A short, but strong and sonorous blow made it possible to solve difficult and difficult problems.

multilayer. Meanwhile, a parallel army was created (just in case), commanded by Viktor Yerin, the same general of the army as Grachev, but, unlike Grachev, not a Hero of the Soviet Union, but a Hero of Russia.

If Grachev received his Gold Star for the pacification of Afghanistan, then Yerin received his for the pacification of Moscow. And therefore, by the end of 1994, the number of troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, not counting the police and escort units, had already reached 800 thousand people, with tanks, heavy artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

The security of the President is a very complicated thing. Moreover, Dudayev threatened: if the anti-Chechen hysteria does not stop in Russia, he will carry out several demonstrative terrorist acts in Moscow.

According to the FSK, which coincides with the data of the SBP, several groups of Dudayev's suicide bombers, ready for anything, have already illegally entered Moscow. All intelligence agencies were put on high alert. And not in vain. It was on this day, December 8, that two terrorist acts took place in Moscow, which could well be called indicative. The only pity is that General Dudayev and the Chechens in general could not be tied to any of them.

Two fellows in masks unexpectedly broke into the 2nd grade of one of the Moscow schools. In front of the astonished children, they beat a 25-year-old teacher unconscious and left. It turned out that the bandits were hired by one of the second-graders with money received from their mother in order to take revenge on the teacher for the unfairly delivered deuce.

Another event happened in another metropolitan school. This time in 1st grade. Where two brothers (27 and 20 years old) broke in with a mock-up of a bomb and an axe. The teacher, who tried to resist, was hit on the head with an axe. The entire class was declared hostage, for the release of which the brothers demanded a million dollars. Finally tied up by the riot police who arrived on alarm, the brothers could not really explain anything, remembering only that before that they had drunk a liter per nose ...

On December 9, it was announced that negotiations with Dudayev would resume on Monday, December 12. For this purpose, General Grachev again flew to Mozdok. There were already two other "siloviki" generals Erin and Stepashin.

News came from Grozny that the city was preparing for defense. Trade in vodka is forbidden, gas masks are distributed to the population.

The democratic factions of the Duma sent an open telegram to President Yeltsin (they had no other way to get through to the head of state). In the telegram, they demanded that the President speak on national television and define his position on Chechnya. The president was warned that "blood and all other consequences" would fall on him, and Russia would again turn into a police state.

All the central newspapers suddenly published an order of the Council of Ministers "On measures to further improve the national economy of the Chechen Republic." It is possible that this was a signal to speak, which determined the D-2 day, since also two days before the invasion of Afghanistan, a decree "On measures to further strengthen Soviet-Afghan economic relations" was placed in Pravda.

In the dead of night, President Yeltsin signed a new Decree No. 2169 c (Secret). The previous Decree No. 2137 s (Secret) of November 30 was considered cancelled. The new decree stated: "To ensure the disarmament of bandit formations in the North Caucasus with all the means available to the state." The decree did not say anything about the talks scheduled for December 12.

words.

Even later, both "speakers" of the chambers were raised from their beds and taken to the Kremlin: Rybkin and Shumeiko. With the preservation of all procedures of secret office work, unshakable since Stalin's time, both were familiarized under a subscription "On non-disclosure" with the text of the decree.

Shocked by the confidence placed in him, the "speakers" vowed to remain silent. They even had a little relief from the heart. They thought that their night call to the Kremlin was connected with a much more serious event than the introduction of troops into Chechnya. Chechnya was the least of their worries in the world. Rybkin was busy publishing a two-volume edition of his speeches and completing his doctoral dissertation on the problems of Russian parliamentarism. He began to write a dissertation with a slightly different title while still the second secretary of the Volgograd regional committee of the CPSU. As for Shumeiko, he was more afraid of future elections than any war (even nuclear war). Seeing in the upcoming events the possibility of their cancellation, the speaker of the upper house laughed with relief.

Saturday, December 10, was unusually quiet. It was reported that General Dudayev handed over to Colonel-General of the medical service Chizh all the prisoners remaining in his hands. In Grozny, only the seriously wounded Private Pryashchikov, who was lying in one of the local hospitals, remained. All the power ministers gathered in Mozdok, preparing, as announced, for negotiations with Dudayev, scheduled for Monday, December 12th.

In Nalchik, a congress of the "Repressed Peoples" opened, which adopted a resolution on the inadmissibility of military actions against Chechnya.

The restless Sergei Yushenkov warned that if an invasion of Chechnya does occur, then the procedure for removing the President from power must immediately begin.

As if in response to this warning, in the middle of the day it was announced that "President Yeltsin is HOSPITALIZED" in connection with the need to perform an operation on the nasal septum. It was indicated that the President would spend EIGHT DAYS in the hospital.

In the evening of the same day, special telephones linking the chambers of parliament with the presidential administration were switched off. The location of the head of state and the first persons of his administration was unknown. All airports in the Stavropol Territory and the North Caucasus turned out to be closed, and a little later, telephone communications with these regions of the country were also blocked.

Late in the evening, the President called General Grachev in Mozdok.

The general announced his readiness.

"So that by December 20 it's all over!" the President ordered.

"Let's get it done sooner!" - the Minister of Defense cheerfully reported.

At dawn on December 11, Russian troops invaded the territory of the Republic of Ichkeria from three directions. Demonstrating the all-destroying power of a great power, columns of armored vehicles marched along the roads of the Nadterechny region without encountering the slightest resistance. With the forces of three divisions, they rushed to the heart of Chechen separatism, the city of Grozny. The whole world had to make sure that not only the United States succeeded in strategic operations like Desert Storm. Just as clearly, quickly and with a minimum of losses, the operation with the code name "Storm in the mountains" will be carried out.

True, unlike the American one, it has to be carried out on its own territory. What to do?

Horried, both houses of parliament and the so-called democratic public started to rouse. Accompanied by the bleating of their "speakers" and "presidential wise men" like Pine and Satarov, the deputies began to beat like flies against glass, trying to buzz at least someone from the power structures who could explain to them what was happening.

Some were even more horrified, realizing that in the hands of the same people who unleashed a war on their own territory, there are also "nuclear buttons". That just like that, one fine morning, the President and his entire team will hide in nuclear bunkers, leaving the uncomprehending population at the mercy of the enemy's hydrogen bombs...

One of the inexplicably mystical mysteries of our recent history is the fact that all the aggressive wars of the Soviet Union, followed by Russia, always started in December. So it was with the invasion of Finland, so it was with the invasion of Afghanistan, so it was with the invasion of Chechnya. Always in winter, always without winter uniforms (in Finland, in 40-degree frosts, soldiers did not always even have overcoats, and in Chechnya it was even cleaner, many soldiers did not even have footcloths: holey boots were worn on bare feet) and, characteristically, without food. Many soldiers ate for the first time only after finding themselves in Chechen captivity.

But the analogy with the Finnish war of 1939 was not only in this. Then the entire Finnish people rose up in arms to defend the independence of their country, rallying around their military leader Carl Gustav Mannerheim, a former general of the Russian army.

Now the entire Chechen people, including women and children, has risen to defend their independence, rallying around their military leader Dzhokhar Musa Dudayev, a former general of the Soviet army.

The identical mistakes of the Kremlin were bound to lead to the same consequences.

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## Chapter 4

"... We wanted the best, but it turned out ... as always."

V. S. Chernomyrdin

The woman was hysterical. She either fell to the ground, clutching a white sheet in her hands, replacing the parliamentary flag, then tried to rise, leaning heavily on her hands and falling again, without stopping shouting out words, interrupted by sobs and heavy sobs:

"Do not shoot! I beg you, don't shoot! There are children! A lot of children! I beg you! I beg you! Do not shoot!.."

Behind the woman, a three-story building of the city hospital was on fire. It was kind of lazy. Here and there the roof was occupied, flames burst from some windows, smoke poured from others. But the windows (in some places along with the frames) were broken on all three floors. Everywhere in the window openings were people, mostly women in white hospital gowns, waving white sheets, pillowcases and towels, screaming or just howling.

Near the front of the building were a dozen and a half corpses in camouflage uniforms with helmets on their heads. A little further away, two infantry fighting vehicles and a tracked four-barreled Shilka anti-aircraft gun were burning down.

The woman continued to fight in hysterics and scream.

The commander of the Alpha special unit, General Alexander Gusev, was also close to hysteria.

The famous, legendary Alpha team was created in the Andropov times in the KGB system to perform especially delicate and risky tasks without too much noise. "Alpha", for example, was credited with storming Amin's palace in Kabul, when she managed to "eliminate" the president of Afghanistan without losing, which was especially noted, not a single person.

However, the similar Vypel team and the Vega team claimed this "feat"; the impression was that all this was nothing more than another myth cobbled together in the analytical department of the KGB. But even this, constantly romanticized "star" Afghan hour of "Alpha", in addition to the will of the creators of the myth, showed that the legendary "Alpha" is, in fact, not an anti-terrorist unit, but a classic instrument of international terrorism in the punitive system of a terrorist state.

After August 1991, Alfa was taken away from the KGB and an attempt was made to transfer it to the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which the overwhelming majority of the group took as a personal insult. The honor of service in the KGB was considered so high.

But the KGB ceased to exist, and therefore a good half of the "Alfa" preferred to quit and disappear into the shadows, and the rest were soon taken into the Presidential Security Department under the wing of Generals Korzhakov and Barsukov.

Soon "Alpha" was congratulated on the new commander. It turned out to be Colonel Gusev, who had previously served in the Kremlin regiment, and then in the commandant's office of the Kremlin under the command of General Barsukov. Appointed as commander of Alpha, Gusev himself was soon promoted to general at the request of his old commander.

On the afternoon of June 14, it was General Barsukov who interrupted General Gusev's afternoon rest with a phone call. The voice of the head of the GDO was anxious and excited, but it was clear that he himself did not fully own the information. A message has just arrived: a group of armed men attacked the city of Budyonnovsk. The district police department, the communications center, and the administration building were seized. There are dead and wounded. "Alpha" should, without a moment's delay, arrive at the scene and take control of the situation.

- Where is this Budyonnovsk? asked the stunned Gusev. He was sure that it was somewhere near Moscow.

- In the Stavropol Territory, Mikhail Barsukov answered.

Fly straight to Stavropol. You will be met there .



— Chechens? Gusev asked.

“Looks like it is,” the head of the GDO confirmed.

It was the seventh month of the Chechen war, or to be absolutely precise, its 187th day. For 187 days, the valiant Chechens have been waging a full-scale war with the armed forces of the superpower; the war, which General Grachev was going to end with one regiment in two hours, and rejoiced at having received nine whole days from the president for this operation.

For half a year, the Russian army managed to suffer several shameful and crushing defeats in Chechnya, bringing down in response to the small republic and its people all the unspent fury that had accumulated for decades for the final triumph of communism on the planet. Possessing absolute air supremacy, overwhelming superiority in artillery and armored vehicles, not to mention numbers, the army failed to break the resistance of General Dudayev's "illegal formations" for six months, in retaliation leveling towns and villages with aerial bombs and multiple rocket launchers, ruthlessly exterminating civilians. At the same time, she suffered monstrous losses, mainly due to extremely low combat training and completely mediocre command.

The assault on Grozny lasted four months. Army units sent there with an order to take the city for the birthday of General Grachev, who was drunk on New Year's Eve in Mozdok in the company of Soskovets and Yegorov, were surrounded, destroyed or taken prisoner. Piles of corpses of Russian soldiers lay on the streets of the city, eaten by dogs, but they rushed into the meat grinder

more and more parts.

Artillery and aviation methodically demolished quarter after quarter, along with the inhabitants, the vast majority of whom were Russians. Concrete-piercing and vacuum bombs fell on the city. He was bombarded with thermite, ball and needle shells, prohibited by international conventions, and doused with napalm. But, despite all this hellish support, the army continued to stagnate, yielding to Chechen fighters in combat training at all levels up to divisional command and control structures in real combat conditions.

The bleeding combined-arms units were withdrawn, and elite units were thrown into Grozny: marines from all three fleets of the Northern, Baltic and Pacific, the best parts of the airborne troops and the famous division that still bears the name of Dzerzhinsky. Furious battles flared up with renewed vigor, clearly demonstrating that a few Chechen detachments can handle even the most elite units of the Russian army. The Marine Corps officer, not embarrassed by the TV cameras, hysterically shouted that if he got out of this hell alive, he would quit his service to hell. Colonel of the airborne troops Morev went crazy when 80 paratroopers of his unit were destroyed in five minutes of battle. Colonel General Podkolzin himself, with a bewildered face, met the colonel at the airfield, transferring the shocked officer to the military commissariats. The headquarters of Generals Rokhlin and Babichev recalled the worst days of the defense of Stalingrad: haggard, unshaven faces; earth falling from the ceiling; the incessant rumble of cannonade.

Again howled and groaned Russia from the funeral. Everywhere from Vladivostok to Smolensk, from Severomorsk to Stavropol, the weeping brass of military bands accompanied zinc coffins, and young widows hid their faces swollen with tears in black kerchiefs. Military hospitals and hospitals filled with the wounded and maimed. The figures of losses were hidden not only from the country, but also from the army itself. Soldiers' corpses were not removed and not buried, or were dumped without counting and counting into mass graves.

The first generals and

colonels. Everyone was struck by the loss of officers, unprecedented in the history of wars, reaching, on average, a monstrous figure of 20 percent of the total number of losses. Soldiers deprived of officers became easy prey for the enemy.

Gradually, the army began to take off its insignia, turning into a motley formation, which at times could no longer be distinguished from the enemy.

Hundreds of soldiers' mothers, whose sons were thrown to the slaughter in an absurd and unnecessary war, rushed to Chechnya in search of their children and took away the ones they found with them, which the history of wars has also never known.

General Grachev himself fought in hysterics, whom the newspapers, in fact, spitting on all the attempts of the authorities to introduce censorship, called "the most mediocre commander in Russian history." "Bastards! - Grachev shouted into the microphone to the whole world, referring to the presidential commissioner for human rights, Sergei Kovalev, and the chairman of the Duma Defense Committee, Colonel Yushenkov. Enemies of Russia! After all, there is no place to put stamps on them!" "My soldiers, eighteen-year-old guys, are dying for Russia with a smile on their lips! - the Minister of Defense shouted pathetically, apparently temporarily crazy, like Colonel Morev, from the true size of the losses. But he didn't know the exact number either.

"Bastards and Enemies of Russia" Sergei Kovalev and Sergei Yushenkov received these epithets from the Minister of Defense only because they asked and begged to stop the massacre and start negotiations with the Chechens. Stop at least in order to collect and bury their own dead. Nobody heard or wanted to hear.

However, this is not entirely true. On December 26, President Yeltsin, who by this time had left the hospital with a corrected nasal septum, at the next meeting of the Security Council, contemptuously twisting his lips, spoke of Sergei Kovalev as a vile traitor who wants to deprive the Russian army of a legitimate victory and save the bandit Dudayev regime.

Recall that Sergei Kovalev, a political prisoner of communist times, who spent 10 years in the Gulag, served as Commissioner for Human Rights under President Yeltsin. At that moment, he was in Grozny, where thousands of Russian people (not to mention Chechens) had already lost their basic human right, the RIGHT TO LIFE, under the bombs and shells that President Yeltsin, as Supreme Commander, rained down on them.

All the newspapers and TV screens of the world went around the terrible footage showing an eight-year-old Russian boy, Misha Epivantsev, who had both legs above the knee torn off by a Russian bomb. When the bombers appeared over the city, Misha, like all the boys, ran out into the street to look at them, and fell under the bomb. He was still lucky five of his comrades were torn to pieces by the explosion.

Did the President or the Minister of Defense, or the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, General Deinekin, who plays the role of an intelligent aristocrat, apologize to his mother and himself? They didn't even think about it. Remember the "old" times, when three people died during the August coup, and President Yeltsin, putting his hand on his heart, mournfully declared: "Forgive me that I, your president, could not protect your lives"? In October 1993, when the victims already numbered in the hundreds, no one waited for such words from Yeltsin. And now he was no longer up to it. Much later, Misha's mother will receive 20 (twenty!) thousand rubles in compensation for the crippled child. And there were thousands of them!

It was about this that Sergei Kovalev sent desperate appeals from Grozny to the President, demanding an end to the unprecedented madness and reminding that it is taking place in a Russian city and in the territory that Russia considers its own. The President was silent, and when Kovalev finally made his way to him with a report on the state of affairs in the destroyed

city, asking to announce at least a short truce on Orthodox Christmas to clean up the corpses and evacuate the wounded, he briefly said: "It's still early." The only thing that the always restrained and intelligent Kovalev could answer to this was the words: "I am ashamed of the president."

And the massacre, meanwhile, continued. After several months of heroic resistance, Chechen fighters were forced out of the ruins of Grozny, where Shamil Basayev's battalion fought for several more weeks. Stalingrad in 1943, Dresden after being bombed by allied aircraft, Warsaw after the withdrawal of the German army from it, these are the comparisons that could be applied to the city of Grozny, when it was finally raised over the ruins of the former Dudayev palace; Russian flag. The picture was creepy to the point of improbability. Nothing like this has been seen since the end of World War II. Even Hanoi, bombarded for 10 years by the Americans, and Herat for just as long by the Russians, do not give an idea of what the capital of the Republic of Ichkeria was turned into. The ruins of Grozny and pictures of the fierce battles going on there did not leave the television screens and the front pages of newspapers. Huge panoramic photographs of the destroyed city were provided with a biting headline: "Constitutional Order".

But the fall of Grozny did not end the war. She's really just begun. The whole world looked with horror and bewilderment at this bloody lawlessness that Moscow staged on the territory of its own country. Europe could see what would have awaited it if it had not been possible to turn this powerful charge of aggressive madness inward. The enraged predator in a rage began to shred himself with his terrible claws and, growling, gnawed at his own tail.

It was the third, fourth, fifth, sixth month of the war. The heroic resistance of the Chechens did not stop, causing the admiration of the whole world. Chechen fighters showed examples of the greatest valor and self-sacrifice. They blew themselves up with grenades so as not to be taken prisoner, rammed columns and headquarters of the Russian army with trucks full of explosives, exploded along with bridges, crashed trains into military echelons.

All these long days, General Dudayev remained elusive. He traveled all over Chechnya either in expensive "foreign cars", or in an armored personnel carrier, or on a tractor; spoke to the people; held congresses of the Chechen people; spoke on permanent underground television; published the newspaper "Ichkeria"; gave numerous interviews to Russian and foreign correspondents; coordinated the actions of his units, making full use of satellite communication and control systems. As soon as Dudayev did not make himself known for a week, the army, through the mouths of Grachev himself, and the FSK, through the mouths of Stepashin, Sobolev and Mikhailov, began to spread through the media messages that allegedly came through their operational channels that Dudayev was either wounded, or killed, or fled abroad. \* Once, General Mikhailov subtly hinted even that Dudayev had been caught.

But a few days later, Dudayev reappeared on TV screens or made satellite calls to Radio Liberty, letting everyone know that the rumors about his death or capture "turned out to be somewhat exaggerated." Then all the generals, apparently forgetting what they had said the day before, began to reassure public opinion by thinking that Dudayev had not yet been killed and caught just because no one needed him, although the Prosecutor General's Office without trial declared him a state criminal who was in prison. All-Russian wanted list, decorating police stands with portraits of the general (especially at railway stations) even in Chita, Khabarovsk and Vladivostok.

Meanwhile, all the fury of the bleeding army, as expected, turned against the civilian population. The planned deportation of the Chechens failed, but hundreds of thousands of Russians, fleeing the bombs and shells of their "native" army and rightly fearing Chechen revenge, fled Ichkeria in a panic, flooding the Stavropol and Krasnodar regions.

Rostov, Volgograd and Astrakhan regions. All the property and dwellings of these people were destroyed, their relatives were killed, the fates were distorted, and on the territory of Russia, as one could easily foresee, they turned out to be useless to anyone. They were refused even refugee status.

As for the Chechens, the vast majority of them preferred to die at their homes or with them. Around the clock, Russian attack aircraft and combat helicopters raged in the skies of Ichkeria, bringing down a deadly load of bombs and missiles on the villages and villages full of refugees, and in the "liberated" Grozny, disfigured corpses of children, women, the elderly and unidentified Russian soldiers were dumped in bulk into ditches and pits dug by an excavator.

All attempts by journalists and the public to get some explanation from President Yeltsin for the ongoing extermination of the people met either with silence or with answers that looked monstrous against the background of everything that people daily saw on TV screens and read in newspapers.

"Military operations, the president explained during his trip to Lipetsk to the journalists surrounding him, are not being conducted in Chechnya. The army is engaged in creative and restoration work there."

A couple of months later, Yeltsin repeated the same expression almost word for word in the presence of US President Clinton, who arrived in Moscow to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the common victory in World War II. During the same time, General Grachev at least four times announced the end of the "military phase" in Chechnya and the transfer of all affairs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. And, meanwhile, the fighting continued with increasing bitterness. However, compared to December, when a wave of bloody madness swept over the Kremlin, the situation has changed in the most radical way, although not everyone saw it. Chechnya made a powerful bid for its right to national independence. And no one could deny this right just as well as before December 11.

Throughout the entire recorded history of mankind, no one has offered national independence to anyone "on a plate with a blue border." Otherwise, as with a weapon in hand, no one has yet been able to achieve it. Russia itself fought for its independence for a long 400 years. Moscow and other Russian cities burned out, like Grozny, to the ground in the process of this struggle; battles where Russian soldiers, without exception, perishing, covered the foundation of Russian statehood with their bones, remained bloody monuments of history. And punishers burst into the burning Russian cities and villages, slaughtering the inhabitants and taking them into eternal slavery.

The United States fought for its independence for almost 50 years. Burned to the ground Philadelphia, Washington. Under the thunder of the guns of the English ships, the royal marines exterminated the population. And until now, despite the events of the two world wars, alienation is clearly manifested between the British and Americans, although they were once a single people with the same faith, traditions and culture. After all, those who later became known as Americans were sent at one time from England across the ocean to develop the royal colony; and they took and raised a rebellion against the crown, and in fact against their own country. They have not completely forgotten this until now, although more than two centuries have passed.

It will soon be 50 years since Israel has been fighting for its independence, and there is no end in sight to this struggle.

And if in December 1994 even President Clinton did not know anything about Chechnya and did not even really know where it was, now any farmer from Arkansas who does not know where

Russia is located, knew about Chechnya, because he watched the terrible events taking place in this tiny republic every day on TV and read about them in newspaper headlines on the front page. Chechnya was flooded with foreign correspondents. Several American journalists have already died there, or are missing. The OSCE delegation arrived in Grozny with a mediation mission. At all meetings and conferences politicians in Europe and the US spoke about Chechnya and about Russia with more and more concern. The American Congress opposed to Clinton has already demanded to stop all economic assistance to Russia until it withdraws its troops from Chechnya. There have been calls in Europe to speed up the admission of former Warsaw Pact countries to NATO before they are treated like Chechnya.

True, all these voices were still not loud enough. In principle, a cynically cold political calculation prevailed: if Russia so likes to fight on its own territory, then let it fight as much as it pleases, let it undermine its last strength!

Indeed, the return turned out to be many times stronger than the shot: The whole world, with increasing surprise, watched how the army, which kept the whole world in fear and tension for fifty post-war years, suffering huge losses, could not defeat some exotic irregular detachments, armed, mainly light small arms, in the complete absence of any effective air defense systems.

It became obvious at what low level the combat training of even the elite units of this army is, how inefficient and old-fashioned its system of communications, control and command, how undisciplined and prone to rapid decomposition.

"And this is the army we were so afraid of!" exclaimed an American general, and he was quite right.

One of the main consequences of the Chechen war was that Russia lost the remnants of any influence in the world, still remaining from totalitarian times.

The global forecast of Western political scientists about the state in which Russia enters the 21st century read: "Poor, armed and very dangerous." Now this statement has dispelled over Grozny, gone into the heavens along with the smoke of numerous conflagrations. "Poor, poorly armed and a danger only to herself."

Meanwhile, in the Kremlin, it seemed that they did not understand this at all and behaved as if the war was going on, at least somewhere in Angola. All attempts, both at home and abroad, to induce Moscow to cease fire and start negotiations with Dudayev, ran into stereotypical answers: "There can be no negotiations with the bandits, except for negotiations on their unconditional surrender and surrender of weapons."

Such stubbornness against the background of continuous military failures looked, to put it mildly, strange. Moreover, most of the plans cherished by those who unleashed this war collapsed. Some a month or two after the start of the war, when it became obvious to everyone that the "blitzkrieg" had failed; others immediately, before even losing the smell of printing ink.

Soskovets was the first to jump off. In the first days after the invasion, he was very active, constantly making shuttle flights from Mozdok to Moscow and back. It was he who was the first, denying the barbaric air raids on the residential quarters of Grozny, to come up with and put into official circulation an explanation: Dudayev's militants, in order to compromise the Russian army, blow up residential buildings themselves, simulating the bombing of the city, when reconnaissance aircraft appear over the city. And what would you think? Many newspapers picked up this version, which the late Dr. Goebbels would not have invented, with pleasure.

In the first days of the war, Soskovets was clearly in a creative impulse. He then publicly announced that most of the Russian media had been bought by Dudayev. The government is aware of this and is going to take away the licenses of these media outlets. It was, of course, about independent publications. But not only about them.

It turned out that Dudayev managed to buy the entire 2nd channel of Russian television, the general director of which, Poptsov, was decided to be immediately removed from office. There was a huge scandal. The country was in a fever from the very first days of the Chechen adventure. And although President Yeltsin did not hesitate to publicly repeat Soskovets's words about "Chechen money" in the Russian press in his address to the chambers, he failed to throw the planned stranglehold on the media.

An irritated cry followed from across the ocean, which was impossible to ignore, money was very necessary. Still would! Another multi-trillion-dollar burden of additional military spending was thrown onto the state budget, which was spreading like a rotten canvas. Because Soskovets somehow got lost, went into the shadows, "jumped off." That's why he is Soskovets.

Nikolai Yegorov was next missing. During the first days of the war, the Minister for Nationalities, who was appointed governor of Chechnya, looked both belligerent and ridiculous. In an officer's cap with a cockade, in camouflage, from which a vest peeped out, the governor with his swollen face, empty eyes and moist, twisting lips resembled some former major of the escort troops, who had long been expelled from service for unrestrained drunkenness and who began to hate humanity for all this.

He was remembered mainly by the fact that every day he promised to take Grozny (once even without a fight) and catch Dudayev, but then suddenly disappeared. True, not with such grace as Soskovets. It was reported that the viceroy caught pneumonia at the combat post and was forced to lie down in the "Kremlin". Even Stalin was powerless against sick leave, and the president had no choice but to appoint a new governor, who, to everyone's surprise, was Nikolai Semyonov, who was once the 1st secretary of the city committee in Grozny. Everyone has already forgotten about the existence of Semenov, and in vain.

The "golden cadres of the CPSU" were securely stored in the presidential chest, which served as the only source of replenishment and replacement of leadership positions. And at the same time, for some reason, everyone continued to wonder why everything in the country was going awry and in the wrong direction.

"We wanted the best," Prime Minister Chernomyrdin constantly exclaimed, but it turned out, as always! This phrase of the prime minister instantly entered the friendly family of national sayings.

Be that as it may, but after the flight of Yegorov, General Grachev was left alone to clear up the mess that. God is my witness, he did not brew at all. For some time there were still other "siloviki" around him: Yerin and Stepashin.

Apparently, all three of them will go down in history, dressed in the same camouflage, huddled together on a cramped bench: Grachev himself in the center, Erin to his right, Stepashin to his left. As a rule, only Grachev spoke, and those sitting next to him did not even try to make smart faces at the same time.

Later, the "siloviki" disappeared somewhere. The signal was an attempt by a Chechen suicide bomber to crash into the building of the headquarters of the federal troops in Mozdok on a truck full of explosives. Soon, two unmarked helicopters fired on the special train of the Minister of Defense. What kind of helicopters they were, they did not find out, while perfectly understanding that there would be easy pilots who would gladly do this work for only 23 thousand US dollars. Since then, Grachev has not appeared in Mozdok, and even Erin and Stepashin even more so.

So, the "triumphants", who looked so menacing in December 1994, in March, one might say, fled in all directions, but as far as possible from the combat zone. And the massacre started by them continued.

Russian society, as it often happened to it in the past, began to get used to this massacre, as to something distant and not very concerning. Newspaper reports and TV reports from the theater of operations were perceived as a completely natural background of Russian reality.

The Orthodox Church, looking at mass graves stuffed with the corpses of Russian soldiers and Chechen women with children, shredded with ball bombs or charred by napalm, kept a solemn silence. Patriarch Alexy did not send a single priest to the theater of operations. Perhaps, and rightly so, because those who wanted to declare this war of religious Christianity against Islam quickly fell silent. Nothing happened, because it was obvious that this was a war between Muslims and atheists: if there was a Koran on one side, then vodka without snacks reigned supreme on the other. The troops constantly forgot to supply food, and what was sent was stolen along the way.

From the very beginning of the massacre, everyone was waiting for what Alexander Solzhenitsyn would say, whose loud voice once, like the Jericho trumpet, contributed a lot to the collapse of the communist regime. They waited, but in vain. Solzhenitsyn was either silent or said something indistinct and unconvincing and unintelligible. Caressed upon his return to his homeland by President Yeltsin (and honored to live with him in the same house), Solzhenitsyn, apparently, achieved the ultimate dream in his forty years of struggle.

Meanwhile, he appeared on television every week with various aspects of the topic "How can we equip Russia", telling sweet stories about the great figures of the zemstvo movement and the noblest rural teachers of the end of the last century, completely ignoring the fact that at the end of this century a large-scale unleashed on the territory of Russia war. When, through Literaturnaya Gazeta, the great writer was asked a direct question about his more than strange behavior, Solzhenitsyn exclaimed with the vehemence of the past: "What kind of Chechnya can we talk about when the Russian school is in such a deplorable state!" However, merciless time and fate, going in a zigzag, do something else with people.

They also shut up Sergei Kovalev, who was trying, risking his life, to stop another outbreak of sovereign fury that was finishing off the country. The campaign to defame the Ombudsman, as we have already said, was started by the President himself, whose words were correctly understood as a directive. The President began, and continued the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Colonel Vladimir Vorozhtsov.

Gathering a press conference and playing with a mocking grin, the colonel drew an analogy between the stay of Sergei Kovalev in Grozny, where he tried to establish negotiations between Dupaev and the command of the federal troops, and any Russian person who, during the Great Patriotic War, would suddenly take it into his head to go to Berlin and negotiate with Adolf Hitler. The highly intelligent colonel has either already forgotten that the war is taking place on the territory of Russia, or has already recognized Chechnya as a foreign state that attacked Russia, as Finland "did" once.

How would you react to such a person, colleagues? asked Colonel Vorozhtsov, continuing to smile. "Colleagues" subdued. Of course, only a very bad person and a traitor to the Motherland could negotiate with Hitler.

The army also carried out explanatory work with journalists. And, at a very high level. Unexpectedly, the commander of the troops of the Moscow military

District Colonel-General Leonty Kuznetsov.

It was about the unfortunate misunderstanding that developed between the army and the press. The general grieved especially over the sharp criticism that the media is subjecting Defense Minister Grachev to. Here the general tore his gaze away from the paper, raised his eyes to the journalists, and blurted out with a soldier's frankness: "These hamlyugs, who are watered by our Minister of Defense, I would have shot with my own hands!"

The journalists fell silent, apparently, not without reason, believing that General Kuznetsov invited them to live on air just for this purpose and just retribution for vilifying the Minister of Defense would be done. After making sure that his paternal words reached the audience, the commander of the capital district continued to lecture the press:

You understand that Grachev is our Minister of Defense! First remove him from his post, and you can say whatever you want about him. And now he's in office! He has a nuclear button in his hands! If you make him very angry, he can also gouge!

The general paused and looked around with his dashing light blue eyes at the frightened journalists. And then confidently added:

- And fucked up!

Genghis Khan's generals probably did not address the journalistic community of their own capital with such a vivid message. Promising to nuke anyone who speaks badly of his beloved boss, Colonel-General Kuznetsov was simply magnificent, reminiscent of an ancient hero who threatened to destroy Rome for "damaging morals."

In fairness, it should be noted that Grachev needed support more than others then. Even his deputies chose to defiantly resign rather than share responsibility for the Chechen war with their boss. Many lower-ranking generals publicly and flatly refused to follow the orders of the Minister of Defense, arguing with him through the media.

Not a single army in the world has ever known anything like this. Twitched by his subordinates, the press, and soldiers' mothers, Grachev rarely appeared in public, and the most striking events in his somewhat dimmed life were that the general first remembered God, and then Zhirinovsky. While on a visit to Georgia, the general received holy baptism, and a week later Vladimir Volfovich was promoted from captain to lieutenant colonel with the right to wear a military uniform.

The massacre in Chechnya visibly began to decompose Russian society. People gradually began to get used to the crimes that are constantly being created in their name. Along with their soldiers fighting in Chechnya, non-combatant generals were decomposing in the rear, reveling in their own impunity and the return of former militarism. Society began to get used to war and funerals, just as it got used to inflation and money with many zeros. The reaction of the population to the war was reminiscent of the medieval reaction to the plague: not in our city, and thank God! Let's pray that it doesn't reach us.

And the secret reports from the theater of military operations, coming to the Ministry of Defense (but for some reason unreadable by Grachev), are already sounding the alarm that no other war (even the Afghan one) gave such a number of psychoses among military personnel. Apparently, because such a war has not yet been. The soldiers, even taken to the rear, cannot sleep. Almost universal alcoholization of the army. The soldiers do not hesitate to exchange weapons and ammunition for vodka and drugs. Decomposition has already affected the elite troops. The Marine Corps of the Northern Fleet was almost completely exterminated, the personnel of the Baltics changed twice,



three times Pacific. The number of deserters exceeded the worst forecasts.

But military counterintelligence was even more alarming. It turns out that the Chechens know by name all the Russian servicemen opposing them in this area. Their surnames and names are known, where they come from, the names of relatives and their addresses. Through combat loudspeakers, the enemy informs the troops about this, threatening to cut out the relatives and friends who remained in the deep and, as it were, safe rear. This most overwhelmingly affects the already low morale of the personnel.

Where does the enemy get this information from? How does he learn about the decisions taken by the command, and even the government, before they learn about the same decisions at the headquarters of their own troops? Have the Chechens penetrated the secret computer control and communications system of the Ministry of Defense? Or are they served by the most powerful "fifth column", operating in all power ministries? Although these questions were raised, no one evoked any emotions at all. Especially with General Grachev. He was ordered to prepare for a pompous celebration of the 50th anniversary of the victory!" over Germany in 1945.

The whole world was going to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe, but in Moscow, torn apart by inferiority complexes, they decided to celebrate the victory, and the whole holiday was marked by an unprecedented psychosis. Like the soldiers shell-shocked in Chechnya. The veterans burst into applause at the mention of Stalin's name and demanded that Grachev rein in the press. Grachev nodded graciously. The youngest participants in the Second World War were already under seventy. Once again, the same nomenklatura leaders with the same appearance, with the same habits and with the same appetites decided to cheat these old, sick and mortally tired people.

Pompous parades in Moscow had no effect on the situation in Chechnya. The fighting continued. The chief of the general staff of the Republic of Ichkeria said that the Chechen troops had finished regrouping and were ready to launch a counteroffensive to recapture their capital, Grozny, from the enemy. Shamil Basayev echoed him, pointing out that the formation of several sabotage and reconnaissance battalions of the Chechen army had been completed, which, interacting with the main units of their army, would soon force the Russian troops to leave Chechnya. No one heard these words because of the thunder of fanfare, glorifying the victory of half a century ago.

No one even learned that simultaneously with the statements of Maskhadov and Basayev in the battle near Shali, which according to the reports was already deep in the rear of the Russian troops, a company of marines from a combined regiment that had recently arrived in Chechnya was almost completely killed. All reports of the Ministry of Defense about continuous victories in Chechnya (namely, these reports gradually became the only source of information for the public) were, to put it mildly, greatly exaggerated. On the territory that motorized riflemen could pass along and across in less than a day, fierce battles had been going on for six months, and this spoke for itself, without even needing any details.

Some doubt was caused by constant statements that an iron ring of blockade closed around the recalcitrant republic. Along the conditional administrative borders between Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, North Ossetia and the Stavropol Territory, outposts of reinforced border troops have already been set up. On all roads, in visual proximity to each other, there were concrete checkpoints of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, reinforced with armored vehicles. A legitimate question arose: where does the Chechen army continue to receive weapons, and most importantly ammunition, in order to fight such intense battles for six months already?

Numerous Russian special services gave the same "intelligible" answers to all these questions as they did about the nationality of those satellites

which General Dudayev and his subordinates continued to use without any interference throughout the conflict.

The war took forms, completely unprecedented. An armada of 50 combat aircraft and about the same number of fire support helicopters bombed the hitherto unknown village of Serzhen-Yurt. Heavy artillery and Uragan installations ironed the village from the ground, tanks attacked. Panicked federal troops in some areas began to use military gases and mustard gas. But it immediately turned out that the Chechens also have such weapons, and no one has serviceable gas masks.

The only thing that the federal troops managed to achieve in half a year of fierce fighting was to raise the authority of General Dudayev to an unprecedented height. The fact that the army led by him for so long has been putting up such fierce resistance to the Russian military machine made it possible for Dudayev to forget and forgive all his pre-war sins. Against the background of what the Russian army was doing in Chechnya, even the surviving Russian residents of Grozny recalled Dudayev's pre-war regime as an ideal of freedom and democracy.

And disasters continued to fall on Russia.

On the night of May 26-27, a strong earthquake shook Sakhalin Island, completely destroying the city of Neftegorsk, inhabited by oil workers. "Khrushchev" from rotten blocks, which with a clear conscience were built in a zone of increased seismic danger, collapsed all at once, as if on command, burying almost the entire population of the village under the rubble.

The disaster was terrible and strangely exactly coincided with another unforgettable disaster that occurred in about the same area 90 years ago at the Battle of Tsushima. But the Japanese, who destroyed the entire Russian fleet at Tsushima, this time immediately offered the help of their first-class rescuers, whose skills were honed during the centuries-old struggle with the consequences of earthquakes.

President Yeltsin refused to help, explaining this as follows:

"You know, I thought: we will accept their help, and then, you know, they will demand the Kuril Islands from us."

Thus, along with the death of Neftegorsk, an international scandal of such magnitude began that Yeltsin, for the first time in his life, was forced to publicly apologize to the Japanese through the mouth of his press secretary. Bryaknul, they say, "not thinking." With whom, you know, it doesn't happen! As a result, the most precious hours needed to save people littered with Khrushchev blocks were lost, and most of the population of Neftegorsk died. The touched president declared all-Russian mourning.

Recently, all the public statements of the President of Russia caused, to put it mildly, some bewilderment. "I like the situation in Russia," he said, preparing for a railroad trip around the country, which, however, did not take place.

This was said at a time when a war was raging on the territory of Russia, from which the wounded and crippled were taken away by echelons, and the number of those killed was already approaching 8,000 people. When. Yeltsin, in the presence of Clinton, was asked what he thought about the war unleashed by him, the president, without batting an eyelid, replied: "There is no war, you understand, there is no going on in Chechnya. The army there is engaged in creative work to restore the national economy.

Red as a lobster, President Clinton listened to "his friend Boris" while staring at the table. He did not comment on these words either immediately or later in Washington. Let them frolic as much as they want, if they like to engage in self-destruction. Moreover, someone has already come up with an expression about the "disproportionate use of force in Chechnya", which looked smooth and

varnished. So once the mass extermination of their own people was called "unreasonable repression." The main thing is not what you do, but how you call it all. Thank God, as the Norwegian meteorological rocket scandal showed, the Kremlin does not seem to have control over its own nuclear weapons. And then there would be much more cause for concern.

And, like many other things, of course, the statement of General Dudayev about his decision to transfer the war to the territory of Russia remained unheard. Chechnya has already made itself known enough to the whole world. Moscow, on the other hand, had already lost the war in all respects, although it did not yet understand this, just as it did not understand quite recently that it had lost the global war, until the Soviet Union began to fall apart before its eyes.

It was June 14, 1995 outside. Quite recently, on June 11, of course, half a year since the start of the war was celebrated without any special celebrations. The next day, the so-called "Independence Day of Russia" was also modestly celebrated, recalling that memorable day of the 91st year, when Russia made the most incredible somersault in its history, declaring "Full state independence from the Soviet Union", and the newly elected president Yeltsin publicly invited all subjects of the federation to take as much sovereignty "as much as they can swallow."

Generals Kulikov and Troshin reported that the troops entrusted to them were continuing a successful assault on the mountainous part of southern Chechnya. According to the FSK and army intelligence, Dudayev was in Shatoi, Maskhadov was in Serzhen-Yurt, and Shamil Basaev was in the Darko Gorge ...

They suddenly appeared KAMAZ vehicles, accompanied by a passenger car roughly painted in police colors, drove into the central square of the sleepy steppe town of Budennovsk, located 220 kilometers southeast of Stavropol and 150 kilometers north of the Chechen border.

Those few who even knew about the existence of this city before June 14, 1995 knew that it houses a large chemical plant, forging, among other things, chemical warfare agents, as well as a large airfield, from where attack aircraft and combat helicopters have been leaving for the past six months on combat missions in Chechnya. The population of the city was approximately 60 thousand people. On the central square, as elsewhere, there was a pompous multi-storey building of the former city committee of the party, and now the residence of the administration.

The clock above the entrance to the building showed 12.30 in the afternoon, when people in camouflage with green bandages on their heads began to jump out of the trucks, on which the statement was inscribed in intricate Arabic script that "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet on earth." It is unlikely that for 300 miles around anyone here could read Arabic script.

The commander of the detachment jumped out of the cab of the truck, a man of medium height, dressed in camouflage with the same vest, and in a soft khaki hat with a slightly turned down brim. Such hats were once worn by border guards serving in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. It was Shamil Basayev, who, according to all the information coming from the FSK, the GRU and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was blocked in the impassable Darko Gorge in the south of Chechnya and dreamed only of how to save his own skin by escaping through Dagestan and Azerbaijan.

Fifteen minutes later, the green flag of the "Free Wolf" of the Republic of Ichkeria flew over the majestic Administration building, which was called the "White House" in the current fashion. And machine guns rumbled on the square, mowing civilians. Administration officials, frightened and pale, completely unaware of what was happening, were led out of the broken entrance of the White House with their hands up. And the sight of the corpses lying on the square, among which were women and children, completely discouraged understanding anything,

making you think only about your own life.

At the same time, the second group of attackers burst into the city department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, firing in long bursts from the stomach. The policemen were taken completely by surprise. It was an hour lunch break, many were in the cafeteria without service weapons. There were also automatic machines in the city department, but they were not even distributed among the employees, being stored in a warehouse in a mothballed form. A group of police officers, moving away from the shock, barricaded themselves on the top floor and began to shoot back. They were not attacked. The Chechens set fire to the building of the Internal Affairs Directorate and ran out into the street, opening fire on passers-by.

At that moment, a bus with pilots from the air town accidentally drove along one of the streets of the city. A grenade launcher was fired at the bus, and the surviving officers were finished off with machine guns. After that, both groups of Chechens united, bringing with them quite a few people captured on the streets and in houses and hiding behind them like a human shield. They went to the city hospital, turning it into their stronghold, and all the patients who were there, along with those brought from the city, into hostages. The Chechen flag was raised over the hospital building.

It was 15:10 on June 14, 1995.

An hour later, the Interfax agency broadcast through its channels a message about this event with the headline: "A group of terrorists was driven out of Budyonnovsk. There are wounded among the population." The message, in particular, said: "The militants who seized a number of government buildings in Budyonnovsk, Stavropol Territory, on Wednesday morning, were driven out of this city and retreated in scattered groups towards Chechnya, law enforcement agencies told Interfax. Separate groups of militants cover themselves during the retreat

taken hostages."

Just at that time, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, who was on vacation in Sochi, gathered at his residence a working meeting of the leaders of the North Caucasian autonomies: Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygea, and also Kalmykia. The meeting discussed the economic and political problems of the regions of southern Russia. At the end of this meeting, the prime minister, at the porch of his Sochi dacha, spoke with obvious pleasure to specially invited correspondents of Russian news agencies, telling them about the federal government's understanding of the problems of the North Caucasus.

A Vesti correspondent asked the head of government about the possibility of spreading the Chechen war to other regions of Russia. With obvious notes of irritation in his voice, which arises in any person when he is asked stupid questions, Chernomyrdin

answered:

"It's out of the question. Absolutely out of the question. All these predictions... It seems that someone really wants this to happen. No, there will be no such distribution. Nobody will allow it. And there will be no distribution! I'm telling you!

When the Prime Minister, having finished talking to the press, returned to the dacha, one of the aides with a pale face handed him a report that Basayev's detachment had attacked Budyonnovsk, which had just been plucked from the teletype. However, this message was one of the first and, apparently, was based on false reports of frightened "law enforcement agencies." It said: "The forces of law and order forced the bandits out of the city in a fight to the south. Departing, the criminals hide behind civilians, women and children. In total, according to reports, the bandits took about 200 hostages. According to law enforcement agencies, most of the terrorists have been destroyed and dispersed. Several militants have already been captured and are testifying."

Chernomyrdin sank heavily into a chair, trying to calm his heartbeat. Then, overpowering himself, he picked up the phone of the government communications and connected with the head of the presidential administration, Sergei Filatov. He was already aware, but in general terms. The President is in Arkhangelskoye, preparing for tomorrow's flight to Halifax for the G7 meeting. He had not been feeling well all day today, but Korzhakov promised to report everything to him as soon as the situation was clarified. Chernomyrdin asked if he should interrupt his vacation. Filatov replied that so far he did not see the need for this. Then the prime minister called the Ministry of the Interior. Minister Yerin was in Georgia on a visit to Shevardnadze, and one of his deputies, General Yevgeny Abramov, spoke to Chernomyrdin. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, he reported, is receiving very contradictory information. General Abramov reported to the prime minister that the terrorists had been driven out of the city, but some of them barricaded themselves in the city hospital and continued to hold about 300 hostages in the building. He also said that the terrorists are led by persons "whose names are known to the command of the joint grouping of federal forces in Chechnya," and "relatives of the militants are already being involved in the negotiation process." At the same time, he categorically ruled out the personal participation in the operation of Shamil Basayev, who, according to all the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSK, is on the territory of Chechnya. This statement will be repeated by the Deputy Minister of the Interior the next day at a briefing to journalists.

Chernomyrdin contacted Erin, who was in Tbilisi.

—

Basayev? — the simpleton Erin was surprised. —

And how did he get there?

Are you asking me? Chernomyrdin fumed. —

I want to ask you, how did he get there?

And hung up.

Oleg Soskovets, who managed to so deftly jump off the footboard of the imperial armored train already flying downhill, sent by him to Chechnya, was forced to appear on stage again, although his face showed how reluctantly he was doing it. However, in the absence of Chernomyrdin, who was on vacation, Soskovets, who by this time held the post of First Deputy Prime Minister, was supposed to chair an emergency government meeting that met on the evening of June 14.

The meeting was also attended by Soskovets' old companion Nikolai Yegorov, who appeared, as officially reported, after a long treatment in the hospital. Indeed, having left the stage in full combat camouflage, Yegorov again appeared in the light of God in a single-breasted suit and tie, having lost most of his former militant greatness. In civilian clothes, he looked as pathetic as General Lebed. He smiled sadly at some of his thoughts and said nothing, although he retained both the post of Minister of Nationalities and the post of Deputy Prime Minister. Things were going brilliantly in his ministry: for the seventh month now, Russians and Chechens had been killing each other with bitterness, promising to make this process permanent.

As for Soskovets, if in December and January his face resembled the face of Alexander the Great before going to India, now it was the displeased face of a busy man, distracted from important matters by some nonsense. His voice no longer contained that determination and iron intonation with which he recently accused the Chechens of blowing up houses in Grozny in order to give the world community the impression that the city was bombed by Russian aircraft. There were no those revelatory prosecutors

notes with which he accused the Russian media that they were all bought by Dudayev. It was the irritated voice of a man who, due to circumstances, was forced to mind his own business.

Informing the audience that the famous Alpha group had already flown to Budyonnovsk and that the forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the FSB, units of the Ministry of Defense and the Main Directorate of Security were being pulled up to the city, Soskovets announced that from "zero hours" on June 15 in the North Caucasus region until a special orders will close all airports. Only military planes and special flights will fly there. Flights from Moscow to the North Caucasus region will be carried out only on the personal order of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. In addition, even during the meeting, Soskovets issued an order to strengthen the security of government facilities, as well as children's summer camps located in the North Caucasus. Along the way, he gave the order to bring the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, units of the FSB, border troops and the armed forces into a state of full combat readiness.

In all federal departments and institutions of all power structures, a round-the-clock mode of operation was established. The General Staff was instructed to bring the troops of the North Caucasian and adjacent districts to a state of high combat readiness, as well as to strengthen the security of all airfields and military camps.

Then Soskovets informed the audience that already today, June 14, from 20.00 Moscow law enforcement agencies have been transferred to an enhanced patrol duty regime. The security of government facilities and the subway has been strengthened. However, a representative of the Moscow Department of Internal Affairs, who was at the meeting, explained that the metropolitan police are not able to provide adequate protection for 300 of the most important objects in the capital, since they lack approximately 16,000 people for this. It was decided to immediately transfer these 16,000 to Moscow from other regions of Russia.

Russia reacted in accordance with all the rules of a country that was subjected to a surprise attack. For the umpteenth time in their sad military history! What a good start to the day. The exchange rate of the US dollar was brought down by as much as 70 points, bringing it to 4,766 rubles. Newspapers reveled in gossip. Finally, it was possible (quickly and without much fuss) to dismiss the obstinate General Lebed. Deputy Prime Minister Chubais was caught in polygamy. Leaving his wife and two children in St. Petersburg, he, under the guise of a "voucher", got along with his own secretary, having made two more children with her. The famous Bella Kurkova was removed from the leadership of the 5th television channel by Chernomyrdin's order.

The representative of the FSB Public Relations Center, General Mikhailov, with a meaningful smile, told the viewers that a special unit of the security service, having warrants for the arrest of Dudayev, Maskhadov and Basaev, went to the mountains to carry out justice. True, Dudayev almost simultaneously with Mikhailov gave an interview to the ITAR TASS agency, not knowing anything that they were already going to arrest him. With pleasure, the rumor about the imminent assignment of the title of "Marshal" to General Grachev continued to be exaggerated. Stubborn correspondents even infiltrated the semi-secret workshop of the Ministry of Defense, where they were shown the new marshal's handmade epaulettes.

And suddenly this news about Budennovsk, which fell on Russia with the same surprise as the recent Sakhalin earthquake. Journalists rushed to the Ministry of Defense. They said they didn't know anything.

The smarter ones rushed to the Lubyanka. The Moscow department of the FSB expressed bewilderment: what do they have to do with it? Budyonnovsky is handled by the federal service, but here, in Moscow, everything is calm. The situation is under control.

The federal service refused to comment on the situation at all, informing only that the head of the TsOS, General Mikhailov, was just now busy preparing a statement for the press, which would be submitted to the news agencies.

The Directorate of Special Operations confirmed that the Alpha and Vypel special forces are already on the scene in full force, along with the entire leadership, and nothing is known about the details of what is happening here, in the department.

The Federal Border Troops Service reported that it had no outposts on the territory of the Stavropol Territory. Please contact the Ministry of the Interior.

Panic and confusion reigned in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. An employee of the public relations center, Colonel Ryabtsev (the journalists could not find the famous Colonel Vorozhtsov), expressed an original opinion about what had happened. The easy access of everyone to camouflage uniforms is to blame for everything. The circle of users of camouflage uniforms, the colonel explained, is so large that it is almost impossible to distinguish its true carriers (that is, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the FSB and the army) from the false ones (that is, customs, various security services, paramilitary groups, and even more so, Chechen terrorists). This allowed the militants to overcome with full gear such a long distance from the guarded borders of Chechnya to the completely unguarded Budyonnovsk.

Correspondents failed to hear an intelligible answer from the acting head of the Public Order Department of the capital, Lieutenant Colonel Lesser. The confused lieutenant colonel honestly admitted that he had no idea what orders and to whom Mr. Soskovets gave. In particular, the fact that in Moscow the police should take under heavy guard all vital facilities, all entrances and exits from the capital, as well as the subway.

And no one, of course, could give an answer to the most important question: how a hundred heavily armed militants could, from the impregnable mountains of southern Chechnya, where it was allegedly blocked, pass through the territory of flat Chechnya, allegedly controlled by federal troops, and a good one and a half hundred kilometers along the Stavropol edge, where OMON checkpoints were in visual proximity to each other; and then actually capture the Russian city and keep it under their control for several hours; to seize, as it was then believed, several hundred hostages and barricade themselves with them in the city hospital.

It was quite obvious that all the numerous secret services were completely taken by surprise, despite the fact that General Dudayev himself had warned many times that he intended to transfer the war to Russian territory. It would seem that the countless officers of the FSB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, military intelligence and counterintelligence, who, according to their own assurances, flooded the whole of Chechnya, are tracking every step of Dudayev's militants as the federal troops "slow victorious march" through the territory of pacified Chechnya and regular performances with the hoisting of the Russian flag over the charred ruins of another village.

There was another failure of the special services in general, and in Chechnya in particular. While correspondents were running from one law enforcement agency to another, trying to find out the details of what had happened, fresh news came from Budyonnovsk. It turned out that the Chechens who had seized the city hospital had a satellite telephone, through which they had already made their first statement.

Declaring that they had more than 3,000 hostages at their disposal, they demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities in Chechnya, the withdrawal of Russian troops from there, and the start of negotiations between Dudayev, on the one hand, and Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin, on the other. Otherwise, all hostages will be shot.

The number of hostages announced by the Chechens immediately aroused distrust. Even according to the most pessimistic estimates, the number of those captured was, at most, 300 people, taking into account the staff and patients of the city hospital. In addition, everyone perfectly understood that neither three thousand innocent people nor thirty thousand would stop the authorities in their blind path along the road of madness. And it was confirmed.

By evening, the reaction of President Yeltsin became known. Through his press secretary, Sergei Medvedev, the president expressed "outrage" that such a thing could happen at all, and ordered Yerin, Stepashin and Yegorov to immediately fly to Budennovsk and personally lead the operation to destroy the terrorists. Not for rescuing hostages, but specifically for destroying terrorists.

The President was beside himself. He was going to fly to Halifax, where he hoped, on the basis of false reports from his close associates, to announce to the leaders of Western countries that the Chechen war had already come to an end. The President has already said this at least three times. And now the attack on Budyonnovsk turned the desired dot into an ominous dot...

Meanwhile, the federal security service, having come to its senses from a short-term confusion, through the mouth of General Mikhailov, reported that the Chechen fighters had as their goal to blow up a large chemical plant located in Budennovsk, which would have an effect no less than in Chernobyl. However, thanks to the measures taken by the "Chekists", this was prevented. Then the militants rushed into the city in impotent rage, taking civilians hostage.

It was not a very well-thought-out lie, calculated only on the dullness of the native population. Intelligence of General Dudaev was well aware that the Stavropolpolimer plant no longer belongs to Russia, but was resold to the Dutch through the well-known Menatep bank. And Dudayev did not want to offend the West under any circumstances. In addition, the Chechen detachment, which took over the whole city for three hours, had no difficulty breaking through to the practically unguarded plant, as well as shooting a huge number of tanks with gasoline and fuel oil, crowded on the access roads of the enterprise.

Why did they have to blow up the plant when their goal was to blow up Russia?! And it has already been partially done.

The very first messages from Budyonnovsk plunged the country into a state of panic and hysteria. The telephones of the operational duty officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB were constantly ringing from the city level to the district police. The excited, ringing voices of the citizens reported terrible details. Chechen terrorists were seen either at nuclear power plants, at gas and oil pipelines, or in the children's recreation area, or even at the Kremlin wall itself, where they gathered with the clear intention of climbing over this wall. In Rostov and Volgograd, reports were pouring in that entire columns of KAMAZ trucks with militants were found in different places, moving along the highway in different directions; a whole group of terrorists was seen at the dam of the Tsimlyansk hydroelectric power station; the helicopter pilot watched for a quarter of an hour as the convoy of militants moved towards Krasnodar.

It soon became clear that Moscow and other cities of Russia could not be defended by the forces of one militia. It was decided to introduce two brigades of airborne troops into the capital. The leaders of other cities also demanded that the commanders of the districts send troops to the cities to protect the Russian population. On Red Square in Moscow and in the Kremlin itself, menacingly tossing machine-gun turrets, paratroopers and armored personnel carriers stood up. The paratroopers saddled the ring road, took airports and their entrances under heavy guard.

A directive flew to all ATC departments:

"to start prevention of persons of Caucasian nationality." The event has already been completed.



If in Moscow, not particularly understanding, they grabbed all the brunettes on the streets ("It's hard to be a brunette in Russia!" Chekhov noted), then in the Stavropol and Krasnodar Territories everything was already much "cooler".

When Erin, Stepashin and Yegorov arrived in Budyonnovsk late at night, the city looked like a besieged fortress, subjected to both an earthquake and a flood. Crowded with troops and all kinds of special forces, with the glow of some incomprehensible fires, resounding with shots in the unlit streets, some crowds of people standing with wild eyes at the uncleaned corpses, the sleepy steppe town seemed to be experiencing the last day of Pompeii in its own way.

The ministers who arrived immediately set up their headquarters in the premises of the local police department, about two kilometers from the occupied hospital. The building of the Internal Affairs Directorate with broken glass, bullet holes in the walls and partially burnt rooms was not suitable for the normal work of dignitaries who arrived from Moscow.

Yerin and Stepashin listened to the reports of their subordinates. Apparently, there are from 40 to 60 militants. Armed with small arms and grenade launchers. About 200 people are being held in the hospital. Alpha and Vypel have already arrived. Tomorrow we will understand the situation better and we will take the object by storm.

The ministers eagerly began to discuss the details of the upcoming operation. Army General Erin was especially animated. Even before coming here, he was honored to talk on the phone with the president himself.

"Destroy all these bastards," the president ordered with his characteristic simplicity of genius.

. "Be ready for a day and a half, as it should be, so as not to do something there, you know, to your own detriment."

Unlike Yerin and the never-desponding Stepashin, Yegorov, the minnat, was sad and taciturn. If in the January days he reminded the impressionable Shurik Nevzorov of a "nobleman of Catherine's times", now he was a sad, tired, twitchy and not quite healthy official of the era of Nicholas I. He was terribly reluctant to come here. He hoped that he would be forgotten, just as Soskovets was forgotten. But no!

To Soskovets, who held the post of minister back in Soviet times, the former Krasnodar district policeman was as far away as General Dudayev. Moreover, the Chechen war, which was planned for nine days, and has been going on for the seventh month, has brought the affairs of the Kuban Bank into complete disarray. Interpol was on the tail of the bank, he was shaken by the tax police, and although Nikolai Yegorov was considered a citizen of the Republic of Cyprus, using tax benefits as such, this did not help him much both in Cyprus and in Russia. In Krasnodar, his house was burned down, and a powerful explosive device was found on the territory of a dacha near Moscow. The debt was about 20 million dollars, and he did not know who the Chechen or Moscow partners were after him. And so he was very sad. Never would have got involved in this adventure, know how things will go.

As Minister of Nationalities, Nikolai Yegorov also listened to the report of representatives of local authorities, who, even before his appearance, had worked proactively in the field of national harmony and friendship of peoples.

Immediately after the Chechen fighters, together with the hostages, barricaded themselves in the city hospital, in Budennovsk and nearby villages where Chechens lived (most of them were in the village of Terskoy), general searches and arrests began. Many Chechens fled the city. In Chechen families, mostly women, children and the elderly remained. By the evening

a large group of Chechen women and children were brought to the Budyonnovsk police department and locked in the basement, after which Basayev was asked to exchange them for hostages, threatening to shoot them all otherwise. Basayev coldly replied: "These are not Chechens, these are citizens of Russia. You want to shoot."

The official administration of the city and the region began to exchange similar ultimatums with Basayev. Anti-Chechen hysteria swept the city, spreading to neighboring areas.

"Death to the Chechens! Kill everyone!" chanted at the rallies. Many could be understood: they had just lost their relatives and friends, some of whose corpses had not yet been removed from the streets of the city.

"Evict all Chechens from the region!" the more moderate demanded.

The Cossack ataman of Budennovsk Maevsky, who himself tore the flag of Ichkeria from the roof of the city administration building, personally reported to the Minister of Nationalities and Regional Policy that after the completion of the operation to free the hostages, he intends to "raise the people to evict this restless nation from all the settlements of the region."

All this was in line with precisely the national policy that Nikolai Yegorov developed while still being the governor of the Krasnodar Territory. Even a whole team of professors, ethnologists and political scientists could not prove to Yegorov that such a policy is suicidal for a country like Russia. You have to learn at a young age. Moreover, local officials showed the minister leaflets that had already been distributed throughout the territory of the Stavropol and Krasnodar regions for about a month.

The leaflets were signed with the abbreviation NORDOS ("Independent Special Reconnaissance and Subversive Suicide Squad"). The flyer said: "We are the warriors of Allah. And before starting hostilities, we decided to turn to the people of Russia and bring our goals and objectives to them" ... forces and military equipment; and also there is a plan for conducting bacteriological warfare: poisoning water bodies, pastures.

**IF CHECHNYA dies, WE ARE READY TO DESTROY RUSSIA.**

Today in Chechnya our mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters are being killed by your fathers and sons. And if they do not stop, then they will know the feeling when their loved ones, innocent people die. Think again! Stop this war and the impending mass terror..."

Although these leaflets had been roaming the south of Russia for about a month, Yegorov, Stepashin and Yerin first got acquainted with their content only in the shelled building of the Budyonnovsk police department, which once again confirmed the "brilliant" work of the Russian special services. It was Egorov who was especially "pleased" to read this, because, having reappeared on the political scene, he did not stop repeating that "there can be no guerrilla war in Chechnya, if only because Dudayev has no social base to conduct it."

Proceeding from this conviction, as well as from the axiom that the Chechen people are a solid gang of criminals, and relying on their own rich experience of dealing with Chechen terrorists in the area of the Mineralnye Vody airport, Erin, Stepashin and Yegorov, after conferring, came to a "brilliant" conclusion: it is necessary to offer Basayev in exchange for hostages (and the ministers already knew that there were at least a thousand of them) two million dollars and a plane ready to deliver them to any country of their choice. This proposal was made to Basayev before dawn.

To the great surprise of the "siloviki", who sincerely considered themselves subtle psychologists, such a tempting offer by Basayev was rejected.

He repeated his previous demands again:

1. Russia's cessation of hostilities in Chechnya.
2. The withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.
3. Conducting negotiations directly between Dudayev and Yeltsin or Chernomyrdin.

There has never been anything like it in the history of international terrorism! As there was no such number of hostages taken. Basayev assured that there were five thousand of them. In Budennovsk, they believed that there were two thousand of them.

From the dawn of June 15, combat helicopters appeared over Budyonovsk. All the streets were plowed and filled with armored vehicles.

Basayev warned that for every helicopter overflight of the hospital building, he would shoot a hostage. In addition, it turned out that the commander of the Chechen detachment already knew about the arrival of the Alpha group in Budyonovsk and warned the authorities against a possible storming of the hospital, saying that he intended to shoot five hostages for each of his wounded and ten for each of those killed. This, as was to be expected, was passed on deaf ears, for there was already an order to storm the building. The only thing that needed to be ensured was the surprise of the attack; and therefore everyone who turned up under the arm of the ministers was assured that there were no plans for an assault. Only negotiations, the main theme of which is exclusively the release of the hostages.

Meanwhile, the special groups "Alpha" and "Vega" were preparing for the assault. "Alf" snipers occupied the nearest approaches to the hospital, 110-135 meters from the building. Through binoculars, stereo tubes and sights, the positions of the Chechens were clearly visible. Alpha fighters counted five points of DShK heavy machine guns and at least a dozen sniper posts. The firing points were disguised according to all the rules of military science. Sectors of shelling overlapped each other. Thus, there was a professionally organized all-round defense ahead. The continuous collection of intelligence on the enemy, to some surprise of Generals Gusev and Kornilov (the commander of Vega), showed that there were more terrorists than Alfa and Vega fighters combined, although Gusev alone brought 130 people with him. The methods of the GRU worked flawlessly.

In addition, intelligence has established that the Chechens have several heavy machine guns and even heavy grenade launchers capable of sinking a cruiser. In addition to everything, they had binoculars and night vision scopes and miniature Japanese radios with encrypted channels. The impoverished Alpha, of course, had nothing of the kind.

General Gusev was already tormented by the question not of how Basayev got from the Darko Gorge to Budennovsk, but of how he brought such a lot of heavy weapons with him. Having served most of his life in the Kremlin regiment, the Alpha commander, of course, knew very little about the real technique of sabotage, where the Soviet Union succeeded even more than in replicating the works of the classics of Marxism, although without advertising. It remained to be assumed that all these weapons were stored in advance on the territory of the hospital, which once again

spoke about the professionalism of native special services.

However, from assumptions and versions it did not become easier. No other anti-terrorist group in the world has ever been in a similar situation. Thousands of hostages in the cramped space of a mined building. TNT explosives and oxygen cylinders from hospital stocks were set up in such a way that it was clear that in the event of an explosion, the main building of the hospital would collapse immediately and bury everyone under its rubble. It was possible to find out that Basayev's fighters also have a novelty, which has not yet entered service with the Russian army, the MON 50 directional mine, in the explosion of which its filling (steel balls) literally mows down all life in the affected area. These "surprises" Basayev put on the most likely directions of a possible attack. All this created an impasse.

However, "Alpha" was not the first time to refuse to carry out the order. So she periodically acted after the scandal in Vilnius in 1991, in August 1991 and in October 1993. Then "Alpha" did not want to listen to anything about the assaults on the White House once when Yeltsin himself was sitting there, the second time when Yeltsin gave this order.

And if Alpha had had its former commander, this would probably have happened, since he would have proved to the assembled ministers, who understand nothing in such matters, that an assault in these conditions without the support of tanks and aircraft is impossible, while fully aware that it is he who will eventually be made guilty of the death of the hostages.

But General Gusev, of course, could not do this. It was his first combat mission, received from, you know, the president himself. The only thing he could do was to hold out with the start of the assault, referring to the need to plan and think everything over ...

And the anxiously awakened Moscow was somewhat reassured by a new statement by Oleg Soskovets, who said that "in the near future, a group of Chechen bandits who attacked Budennovsk will be liquidated, and the hostages will be released." Soskovets did not doubt this, just as he had never doubted that it would be possible to conquer Chechnya in nine days.

However, he already had enough to do to deal with such trifles as a raid on Budyonnovsk. And he insisted that Prime Minister Chernomyrdin interrupt his vacation in Sochi and return to Moscow. Moreover, President Yeltsin was going to Halifax, and according to an unwritten law, the prime minister was supposed to stay behind him.

While they were rowing and wondering whether Yeltsin, preoccupied with the fate of so many Russian citizens who had become hostages of "bloodthirsty bandits", would refuse a trip to Halifax, the president dispelled all doubts by appearing at the airport determined to fly away from Moscow.

On the President's face there were still obvious traces of yesterday's malaise (

we should not forget that June 12 was "Independence Day", which, by right, can be considered a personal holiday of the president), but he was cheerful and confident.

Telling reporters that he

(just like a Jew from a joke going to Israel) hesitated to go or not to go to Halifax, he decided to go. "Dudaev's people, the president emphasized, cannot frustrate the foreign policy plans of a great power. The robbery action, unprecedented in its cruelty, puts an end to the discussion about the nature of the former Dudayev regime. Now the whole world has seen what and against whom the Russian soldiers fought in Chechnya." Taking a breath, the president continued: "It remains to be seen how such a barbaric act was made possible; why those in charge of maintaining law and order released the situation

out of control."

Such a promise by the president to deal with those who again plunged their motherland into shit, caused a whole chorus of excuses from high-ranking "law enforcement" officials.

Deputy Interior Minister General Abramov said that "according to reports, the militants infiltrated to Budyonnovsk through Dagestan." In this explanation, the most remarkable was the verb "leaked": with heavy machine guns and heavy grenade launchers on two (and according to some reports on three) multi-ton trucks.

The Federal Border Service of Russia completely refuted the fabrications of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Outposts of border troops have already been deployed on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan. No one could "leak" there. The militants, for sure, went through the border of the Stavropol Territory.

General Grachev, barely hiding his joy at the fact that all the "siloviki", except for him, were in shit, decided to drown them a little more, saying with a chuckle: generally held, formally.

Even before that, the Department of Press and Information of the Ministry of Defense made it clear to everyone that this issue does not concern the military department at all, noting that

"the armed forces of the Russian Federation do not take a direct part in the liquidation of terrorists."

Well, the Federal Security Service turned out to be true to its traditions. She warned everyone in advance about the upcoming "actions of retaliation", but no one listened to her. It could be added that Dudayev also warned everyone.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the last to speak out through Minister Kozyrev himself. The minister, who from the very beginning instinctively tried to get dirty in the Chechen massacre, and therefore smeared from head to toe with the mutual responsibility of the presidential entourage, was also very categorical. "The West," he said, "instead of preaching morals to Russia (the West has always "chided" Russia for its constant desire to exterminate its own people), should" join us in the fight against international terrorism and change its one-sided critical attitude towards Russia's actions in Chechnya".

The reaction in Chechnya itself was also very original, clearly indicating that everywhere the Soviet school triumphed, which was passed by all Russians and Chechens. Former speaker of the Chechen parliament, Yusup Soslanbekov, said that the attack on Budyonnovsk was "a provocation from Moscow" that needs to "prepare public opinion for the genocide of Chechens in Russia and abroad. Not a single person will pass through the checkpoints without an inspection without the consent of the federal authorities."

Morning newspapers in Russia and abroad reacted to the event with flashy headlines "Civil war on the territory of Russia has begun", "Dudaev transferred hostilities to the territory of Russia", "Budyonnovsk: blow to the rear of Russia. A guerrilla war has begun!", "There are more and more special services in Russia, and terrorists are seizing cities", "Chechen flag over a Russian city!",

"South of Russia is drawn into the conflict, like Northern Ireland", "Moscow, by its decision to start a war against its own people, has driven itself into a corner, it has no way out", "Chechens are killing our women and children! Stop the genocide of the Russian people!"

Correspondents of all news agencies who rushed to Budyonnovsk, breaking away from

voices of excitement were transmitted from the scene:

"Budenovsk was at the disposal of Basayev's people for several hours. According to preliminary data, 49 people were killed and 85 wounded. Hostages were herded from all over the city to the territory of the hospital, which, as it turns out, were more than 1,500 people, including pilots of the air camp from the assault and helicopter regiments. Five officers-pilots have already been shot by order of Basayev "for crimes against the Chechen people."

The head of the FSB CSO, General Mikhailov, only shrugged his shoulders in response to journalists' questions. What do you want? We have few employees, only 176 thousand, and there is no money. All special forces have been taken away from us, and there is no money. However, we warned. And even prevented several similar cases. There are no grounds for concern. The bandits will be eliminated in the very near future...

And in Budyonovsk itself, events began to develop even more strangely. While General Gusev, referring to the lack of fire on his people, did everything in his power to delay the start of the assault, and Yegorov, Stepashin and Erin assured everyone present that there would be no assault, Shirvani Basayev, Shamil's brother, arrived in Budyonovsk and was unhindered admitted to the hospital.

After that, a retired KGB general Andrei Chernenko, who is now deputy to Minister Yegorov, unexpectedly announced that "the militants demand a meeting with Russian and foreign journalists." He noted that "federal representatives agree to go for it and provide such a meeting if the guarantee of the safety of reporters is confirmed, but insist that this meeting be held on neutral territory, and not in a hospital, as the militants demand." Basayev said that if the meeting with journalists did not take place before 20:00, 5 hostages would be shot. This was reported by the local surgeon Vera Chepurina, whom the Chechens specially released from the hospital with this news. But even after that, the "siloviki", for unknown reasons, continued to play for time.

It is possible that an intelligence message played its role here, passing through secret communication channels and asserting that "Basayev is currently in the south of Chechnya, where he leads the main Dudayev forces in the Vedeno region."

People always get lost when faced with mysticism.

Army General Yerin, who rightly considered himself the senior minister among the ministers who rushed to Budyonovsk, gathered around him an impromptu meeting, half of the participants in which were his personal guards. Thanking the townspeople for their courage and heroism, Yerin reassured them, saying that Budyonovsk is in a triple cordon ring and no one will be able to break into the city or escape from it. Of this, everyone can be absolutely sure. The situation in the city itself is controlled by police forces and army units. Stores and businesses are temporarily closed. He advises residents not to push on the streets, but to stay at home. It was a strange call to people, almost each of whom had one of their relatives and friends among the hostages in the captured hospital.

The hospital also housed an obstetrics and gynecology department, where about 150 women in labor were treated. Some of them are already with babies, some are waiting for childbirth every minute, some are keeping their pregnancy. There was also a children's pediatric department in the hospital, where there were mothers with young children. Their relatives demanded an answer from the minister, how does he think to release them? Will there be an assault?

Calm down, citizens! Erin assured.

There will be no assault. It's not even planned. Only negotiations! And don't worry. So far, so good...

Just at that moment, a message came that Basayev ordered the execution of five captured pilots for not arriving on time for the promised journalists.

The Alpha fighters watched the execution from their posts. According to them, they watched with clenched teeth, because none of the Alpha fighters had the right to shoot without an order ...

Basayev rather unceremoniously demonstrated who was the master of the situation, warning that five people would be shot for every half hour of delay. The deputy chief physician of the hospital, Kostyuchenko, and the head of the surgical department, Skvortsov, suddenly arrived at the headquarters deployed in the ROVD, begging them to hurry with the journalists, because if the press was not delivered to the hospital by 20.00, 10 more would die.

hostages.

The bus with journalists finally left the headquarters. They took a receipt from all correspondents that they were going to the hospital voluntarily and that no one was now responsible for their safety. The receipts were selected by the famous Colonel Vorozhtsov, who had arrived in Budennovsk with Erin, who was searched in vain in Moscow. At the same time, the colonel continued to grin mysteriously and mockingly, like a man who owns the highest secret of being.

At the last Russian checkpoint in front of the hospital, the journalists were ordered to leave the bus without explanation. Apparently, in fear for state property. Then we had to walk for about a kilometer. Doctors in white coats walked ahead, waving their hands. The approaching main building of the hospital seemed dead. At the entrance to the hospital courtyard, journalists saw Chechens dressed in camouflage with machine guns in some windows. Girls in white coats of nurses and nurses looked out from some windows.

The order to halt was given and the slow process of document checks and searches began. Basayev, not without reason, feared that under the guise of the press, Alfa would make an attempt to enter the hospital.

But "Alpha" wisely did not make any attempts. A couple of local FSB agents who were ordered to infiltrate the hospital under the guise of hostages were instantly exposed and shot on Basayev's orders.

Before the Chechens had time to watch even a third of the journalists who had arrived, automatic bursts rumbled from the direction of the city and bullets whistled over the heads of the correspondents. The barricaded building bristled with return fire. Terrified reporters began to press on the Chechen checkpoint. The Chechens allowed the pushing crowd to squeeze into the narrow passage and locked the door with an iron bolt.

The representatives of the press were taken to the second floor, where the entire space was filled with sitting and lying hostages, among whom women and children predominated.

A hospital hairdresser was cutting several Basayev fighters overgrown in the mountains. Those with pleasure substituted their black hair under a stream of refreshing "Chirp".

Before the wildly looking around journalists had time to somehow get used to what they saw, the authorities, who were probably gnashing their teeth in rage for being forced to comply with Basayev's demands, had a new fit of hysteria. Machine-gun bursts hit the windows of the hospital. Half an hour ago, watching the execution of the hostages, "Alpha" did not dare to open fire, because it did not have an order. Now, when journalists entered the hospital building, someone apparently gave this order.

The correspondents collapsed to the floor, probably remembering the smile with which Colonel Vorozhtsov took receipts from them about the removal from the authorities of any responsibility for their lives. Shards of glass rang, priests, groans and the hysterical cries of children were heard.

The shooting stopped as suddenly as it started. Taking advantage of the pause, the Chechens, swearing in Russian, transported the journalists, who were lying on the floor interspersed with the hostages, to the basement, where Shamil Basayev, surrounded by several of his officers, met them.

Approximately one and a half dozen television cameras were directed at him, when calm and quiet in a voice he said:

We have little hope that at least one of you can tell the truth... I am Colonel Shamil Basayev, commander of the reconnaissance and sabotage battalion of the army of the Republic of Ichkeria. We were not going to capture Budyonnovsk. We had a different task. We wanted to get to Moscow, have a little war there and see how the Russian authorities would bomb Moscow. But our whole operation failed because of the greed and greed of the traffic cops. We simply did not have enough money to get to Moscow. In such a sad way, the city of Budyonnovsk was taken hostage.,

Reiterating his demands for the Russian authorities to end the Chechen war, Basayev added: "We have absolutely no intention of killing any of the hostages. We shot government employees, we have enough of them in response to the fact that snipers wounded several of our comrades. And then we'll shoot. And we will not shoot women and children, we are not maniacs. As a last resort, if our conditions are not met, WE WILL FORCE THE RUSSIAN TROOPS TO DO IT. Let them come and attack. We are tired of watching how our women, old people, children are killed, our villages are bombed ... And we came to Russian villages.

Having completed his statement, Basayev expressed his readiness to answer the questions that poured in from all sides.

Have you met with senior management?

- No. Neither high nor low.

Who are the hostages? —

Citizens of the Russian Federation, including Chechens. We released foreigners.

How much did you buy traffic police posts? —

From 100 dollars for all to 5000 rubles for each.

What are your losses? —

8 killed and twelve wounded.

If your demands are met, will the Chechens continue to take revenge on the Russians?

We retaliate because we have been pushed to the extreme. I'm not talking about our loved ones, the children who were killed, about pregnant women, about 65,000 Russians who were destroyed, about my two brothers, two daughters, wife, sister, who were killed. 11 of my relatives died. Give us freedom!

Are you suicide bombers? —



We are all mortal. But it doesn't matter to us when we die. It matters how.

Could you do the same in Moscow? And what forces?

- The Kremlin could have been captured by these forces, despite 40,000 guards along with Korzhakov.

Why did you choose the hospital to take over? —

At first we wanted to fight in the center of the city, but the ambulance doctors turned out to be people of honor and duty. Despite the battle, they grabbed the wounded, including ours, and took them to the hospital. And we went after our wounded comrades so that your soldiers would not finish them off, as they always do.

Correspondents tried to find out the size of the Basayev detachment. He explained that 210 people went on the raid with him.

He again emphasized that he was going to get to Moscow, but noted with regret that "when we were stopped at Budyonnovsk, I had only 100 dollars left in my pocket."

Here in the hospital, Basayev continued,

they set up a filtration camp following the Russian example in Chechnya. Candidates for execution are filtered out primarily from among the military and police officers. He is not going to shoot ordinary people, but will let the Russian troops do it in the event of an assault.

Further, referring to the shooting at the hospital while the journalists were there, Basayev suggested that "the Russian military hit the journalists precisely. If he did not carry out a thorough check below and the journalists immediately proceeded to the room prepared for the meeting on the second floor, then losses among the press workers would have been inevitable, because the fire was fired precisely at this room.

Having finished the conversation with the journalists and having informed the whole world of his demands, Basayev called the headquarters of the "three ministers", informing them that the journalists would now go back. It is advisable not to shoot at them.

From the headquarters they gave permission for the return of the press.

In single file, the correspondents walked along the ominously dark street until they heard a menacing call:

Stop! Move one by one! Distance 10 meters. Prepare documents for verification! They were already theirs.

Many journalists immediately began to be interrogated about the available forces of Basayev's detachment, their weapons and placement on the floors.

By this time, the director of the FSB, Stepashin, had come to the conclusion that he, too, should make his contribution to maintaining military secrecy and achieving elements of surprise in connection with the upcoming assault.

That is why he gave an interview to the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, which his department always patronized and even recommended not to change its name, although there had been no Komsomol in the country for a long time. "So that later you wouldn't be ashamed," said the "Chekists", hinting that the Komsomol would soon return in the arms of the adored party ...

"What actions will be taken in the near future?" asked Stepashin

correspondent, to which the FSB chief replied:

We will negotiate. The task is one: SAVE PEOPLE.

Meanwhile, the appearance of Shamil Basayev on television screens around the world, among other things, put an end to the version that the raid on Budyonnovsk was a "provocation of Moscow" or a "new Gleiwitz," as Shamsedin Yousef, Dudayev's foreign minister, put it.

If at the very beginning of Basayev's action, Dudayev, not yet knowing how events would turn out, completely disowned the participants in the raid, stating that "neither I, nor the administration, nor the government, nor individual services of Chechnya gave orders to conduct such actions on the territory of Russia ", already on June 15 in the evening, the Minister of Justice of Chechnya Ruslan Imaev admitted in a telephone interview:

"We have repeatedly warned the Russian leadership, but they did not listen to reason."

Almost simultaneously, a hitherto unknown organization, the Warriors of Islam, claimed responsibility for the events in Budyonnovsk, claiming to act on behalf of the entire Muslim population of the former USSR. "The cruelty and murder of the Chechen nation makes us embark on the path of Jihad."

"Let's be honest," Galina Kovalskaya called on the pages of Novoye Vremya, "

Budyonnovsk is not quite the terror that Dudayev promised us, not quite what we were waiting for with hidden fear. A terrorist group of 200 people, break it into threes and start working according to the method of some kind of IRA ... It's scary to think what the life of Russian large cities could turn into ... "

The life of Russian large cities was already shaking with tension.

The police and the riot police seized everyone at the collective farm markets, even if they were vaguely reminiscent of people from the Caucasus. A group of Italian tourists was detained in the center of St. Petersburg; in Moscow, a delegation of Algerian students was captured. Of course, they had to apologize to them and then let them go, but this made the law enforcement agencies even more furious. One of the police chiefs, in whose head all concepts and instructions were mixed up in connection with recent events, said in a television interview:

"Forgive me my ANTISEMITISM, but we have received orders to detain and check all persons of Caucasian nationality."

In Budennovsk itself, Nikolai Yegorov tried to contact Basayev by phone. He had to speak with one of Basayev's deputies, Major Aslambek Abdulkhadzhiev, who at one time was the military commander of Shali. Yegorov again offered the Chechens money and a plane to anywhere in the world in exchange for the release of the hostages. Abdulkhadzhiev confirmed to the Minister of Ethnic Affairs the demands Basayev had made several times already, repeating that there were 5,000 hostages in the hospital and they would all be destroyed if Basayev's conditions were not met. Egorov asked to release at least the children. Abdulkhadzhiev recalled that everyone who is part of Basayev's detachment had their children killed under Russian bombs. And they came here not to bargain, but to die. Mentally, all the warriors of Islam have already lost their lives.

To this, Nikolai Yegorov had absolutely nothing to answer, except to swear loudly. The deputy chief physician Kostyuchenko, released from the hospital, followed him with his tail, constantly reminding him that at least 2,000 people were in the hands of the Chechens, begging the minister to make concessions, to stop overflights and shelling of the building. Irritated, Yegorov ordered the doctor not to let him in anymore.

Meanwhile, President Yeltsin arrived in Scotland in the best of spirits, preparing for his flight to Halifax. If, before departure, the Russian President assured everyone and everyone that "in fact, the G7 had already become an even larger G8," then he was in for a quick, deep and painful disappointment.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien specifically warned Yeltsin not to show up in Halifax before Friday afternoon. No one to meet, no one to greet. On the faces of Western leaders one could read frank bewilderment: how can one leave one's country at a time when the lives of thousands of Russians are at stake, even if one does not count Chechens as Russians anymore. None of them could do that, if only out of a sense of responsibility to their citizens and voters. And with what, in fact, did Yeltsin go to Halifax?

With the general words of ensuring nuclear security and with the "innovative" idea of achieving a quick peace in Bosnia, in which no one but himself believed.

Therefore, upon arrival in Halifax, the President of Russia was taken to the circus, where he took his soul away, laughing to tears.

On the morning of June 16, a grandiose scandal erupted in the State Duma, which had gathered for an emergency meeting. The entire agenda was dedicated to Budyonnovsk. Deputy Interior Minister Yevgeny Abramov and FSB Deputy Director Nikolai Kovalev, invited to the meeting, bleated something from the podium, clearly showing that they had absolutely no information about Budennovsk, except for officially published information. But both, taking advantage of the opportunity, raised another cry about the lack of people and money from their services. Nikolai Kovalev went even further, emphasizing the need to restore for the security service those functions and rights that the state security had during the existence of the USSR. Otherwise, it is impossible to work, the high-ranking "chekist" emphasized.

This made an impression, however, not on everyone. The Duma, irritated by its complete sham, when the most important state decisions were made not only without its approval, but even without its knowledge, exploded, demanding the resignation of the government, and, first of all, the power ministers. Separated from the President by something heavy on soundproof glass, she tried at least now, in such a tragic situation, to shout to the Head of State, threatening him with impeachment.

Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin, who was appointed by the President to his Security Council, had the task of "taming" the most violent deputies, but now, in the face of the Budennov tragedy, he could do nothing but try to divert the blow aimed at the President in the direction of the "siloviki".

"The breakthrough of terrorists from Chechnya to Budyonnovsk happened with the connivance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB," he said. On June 12 and 13, a code was sent to the heads of law enforcement agencies, security services and military units about possible breakthroughs by bandit groups. At the same time, the "speaker" did not explain who sent these encrypted messages to the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It seemed that they were supposed to send such encryptions to all instances?

Rybkin's maneuver was ignored, and the leader of the DPR faction, Sergei Glazyev (heir to the famous Travkin), who came to the podium, demanded an immediate vote of no confidence in the government, citing the fact that he already had the necessary signatures of the deputies. The leader of the Yabloko faction, Grigory Yavlinsky, who spoke next, opened an attack on the President, angrily exclaiming:

"Boris Yeltsin should not have gone to Halifax, but to Budyonnovsk!"

He was unexpectedly supported by the leader of the Communists in the Duma, Gennady Zyuganov, who himself was aiming for the presidency.

"The President should not sit in Halifax as a "six" in the dressing room at the "seven", but in Budennovsk!" Demanding the immediate resignation of the government, Zyuganov offered the deputies a list of an alternative governing body, resplendent with the names of provocateurs and rogues known since the August coup: Sergei Baburin, Svetlana Goryacheva, Nikolai Gubenko, Vasily Starodubtsev and Amelda Tuleev.

However, this attempt at a communist breakthrough to power was suddenly repelled by the country's main liberal Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who accused Zyuganov of trying to create the GKChP 2, and the authorities of creating the current situation in the North Caucasus in order to impose a state of emergency in the country and prevent elections.

"Everything is going according to the script," the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party assured his fellow deputies, "

we need a war to disrupt the elections." Then Zhirinovskiy, with his characteristic categoricalness, announced that soon President Yeltsin would be removed and power in the country would be seized by Mikhail Gorbachev, Gavriil Popov and Alexander Lebed. Such a development of events can be avoided only by restoring the KGB, bringing its number to a million employees, while increasing the army to four million people, moving along the way to the provincial administrative-territorial division of the country and allowing deputies to carry weapons.

Then in the Duma, as always happened after the speeches of the main liberal, abuse began, threatening to turn into a fight. The situation was defused by one of the Communists, gloatingly shouting:

"Where is Sergei Kovalev? He constantly appeared in Grozny, but something is in no hurry to Budyonnovsk!"

Rising, Yegor Gaidar informed the deputies that the presidential commissioner for human rights was already on his way to Budyonnovsk.

Sergei Kovalev, whom the Duma had already removed from the post of chairman of the human rights committee, was at that time in Germany in connection with the award of the Hokker Freedom Prize. As soon as he heard about the events, he immediately interrupted his trip and flew to Moscow, and from there to Budyonnovsk. He was joined by deputies from the "Choice of Russia" Mikhail Molostov, Alexander Osoltsov and Yuli Rybakov, who spent the whole winter sitting with him under "native" bombs in Grozny. They were also joined by a deputy from the Yabloko faction Valery Borshchev.

Newspapers of various trends that had come to the rescue by this time continued to appeal to the public opinion of the country with catchy headlines: "A bloody challenge to all of Russia! The green flag of Chechnya over the Russian city should open everyone's eyes to a simple fact: the unsundering enemy must be destroyed! "The war in Chechnya is over, the massacre has begun in Russia!" "The Russian city is a hostage of the Chechens", "From now on, Russia is defenseless against terrorism." "Moscow has been bogged down for years in a bloody swamp." "The way out of the impasse," the Parisian "Liberation" noted, "is negotiations with Dudayev, but this is political suicide for any Russian politician."

In the meantime, the FSB, torn by a desire to be of some use in the nationwide struggle against Chechen terrorism that had begun, unexpectedly raided a branch of Chechen-Press, located in one of the houses in the very center of Moscow and which had been functioning for all the past six months from the moment it began. war, although it was created somewhat earlier. There was also the official representation of Chechnya in Moscow, headed by Dudayev's personal representative Khamat Kurbanov,

who had satellite and computer communications with his president ...

Khamat Kurbanov and his wife Olga lived in Moscow for about 15 years and only in October 1994 agreed to represent the government of General Dudayev in Moscow. At the same time, he not only did not hide, but, together with his press attache Ramzan Muzaev, visited many officials in Moscow, presenting credentials signed by Dzhokhar Dudayev to everyone, explaining the policy of his country and making efforts to avoid war.

On June 16, the branch of Chechen-Press, which had existed for more than six months, was declared the "residence of Dudayev's intelligence", and Khamat Kurbanov, of course, the "resident". Searches were carried out in the premises of Chechen-Press and in Kurbanov's apartment. No traces of weapons and ammunition were found there, but they found camouflage uniforms, photographs, notebooks with phone records, including Yeltsin's reception, as well as dossiers from newspaper clippings on political leaders of various directions.

All this no longer caused anything but bitter laughter. Especially considering that all these actions were carried out on the basis of a presidential decree on strengthening the fight against banditry. In the same way as the presidential decree on intensifying the fight against fascism led to a search not, say, in the Russian National Unity, whose guys openly wear a swastika on their sleeves, but, it is not clear why, at Valeria Novodvorskaya. That's the kind of power we have...

The coming Friday did not bring any visible results in the release of the hostages. Representatives of the federal law enforcement agencies contacted Basayev by phone every even hour, insistently offering him two million dollars and a plane to Libya. With the same monotony, Basayev repeated his previous demands.

Having phoned Moscow, the "siloviki" raised the amount to three million dollars. Basayev again refused. How much does he want? Stepashin, Yerin and Yegorov looked at each other meaningfully. Well, this wolf has an appetite!

During numerous incidents with "Chechen" terrorists at the Mineralnye Vody airport, it was always possible to negotiate with them for an amount not exceeding two million dollars, or even for half. True, Dudayev said something there that this was Moscow's provocation in order to prepare the country's public opinion for an armed invasion of Chechnya. But who was listening? What kind of invasion? Has this Chechen maniac gone crazy? But it turns out that he simply knew the methods well, in which Moscow itself believed. Where has it been seen that a Chechen refuses two million dollars. The only reason could be that he wants more.

And they continued to bargain, giving Alpha the opportunity to prepare properly for the assault, so that "you understand, not to do something there to harm yourself."

Alpha was preparing, although without any enthusiasm. Among the fighters of "Alpha" (oh, times, oh, morals!) Correspondents of various agencies, including Western ones, snooped around. Some officers irritably waved them off - you just now were not enough! But others willingly gave interviews:

How many hostages will die if you storm? - asked the correspondent of "Radio Liberty" one of the "Alfa".

Everything," the officer answered without even thinking for a moment.

And how many of you will die in this case? the journalist asked.

Three to one, at least, - the Alpha fighter sighed. -

We cannot use artillery and aircraft in these conditions. He paused and added:

"Let the politicians understand better. They made this mess. They should already have 'bloody boys' in their eyes."

"Alfovets" knowingly grieved for their lack of artillery and air support. Six months of the Chechen war have already demonstrated such a difference in the combat training of Chechen fighters and Russian soldiers that any so-called "contact battle" with the Chechens only led to huge losses on the Russian side in killed, wounded and prisoners, without giving any, which was especially offensive, even tactical results. A couple of dozen Chechen militias could defend the village for a month, repulsing all attempts by Russian troops to take possession of this village with machine guns and grenade launchers, and even managing to go to the nearest bazaar where Russian soldiers traded ammunition.

Therefore, according to all the rules of the false theory of the late General Douai, they decided to "bomb out" the war, since in the classic case of applying this theory, which proposes to wage war exclusively by the air force, the enemy should not have aviation at all.

That is exactly what happened in Chechnya. Bombs and shells rained down on populated areas every 15-20 seconds. Only from one roar of explosions children turned blue and died from a broken heart, not counting those who were killed by fragments and fragments of collapsed houses. In some cases, this tactic worked: the civilian population, unable to withstand this horror, asked the rebels to leave the village themselves and threw themselves at the mercy of the victors. For example, in Samashki or in the village of Asinovskaya.

But in most cases, the full use of the tactical theory of the old Italian general only multiplied the number of fighters in the army of General Dudayev. Having lost their children, the fathers of yesterday, still peaceful peasants, resolutely took up machine guns. They did not like General Dudayev, but they hated the murderers of their children, and Dudayev was the only symbol of national resistance to the now quite clear policy of genocide by the distraught Moscow leadership. If what happened in Budyonnovsk, somewhere in Chechnya, the hospital building would have been smashed to rubble with vacuum explosion bombs and heavy long-range artillery shells, no matter how many patients and hostages there were.

But in Budyonnovsk, one could not count on the support of aviation and artillery, mainly because of the frightened and confused leadership.

Unfortunately, not everyone gathered in Budyonnovsk to admire the work of their hands, who half a year ago so thoughtlessly "plunged", according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev, into the Chechen adventure.

Egorov, Stepashin and Yerin, and it was very symbolic, tried, this time nervously and frightened, to clear up the porridge they had brewed. But which of them were fighters, if we remember that two were district police officers in the past, and the third was a teacher of Marxism-Leninism at the Fire School.

After all, how General Grachev was missed in Budennovsk!

How wonderful all four of them would look, as in the glorious days of the storming of Grozny!

General Grachev, who followed the mediocre actions of his accomplices, in his own words,

"Hands itched to come to Budyonnovsk to direct," and one can imagine what would have been left of the city when aircraft raised by Grachev would appear in the sky above it to deliver pinpoint strikes on the hospital. It seems that if President Yeltsin was in Moscow at that moment, he would have allowed Grachev to lead a little. But the President, according to Gennady Zyuganov, fortunately, sat as a "six" in the dressing room at the "seven", and Grachev, who was not allowed into Budyonnovsk, gladly presented the public with his comments on what was happening. For starters, he said that he would have liberated the hospital in Budyonnovsk in an hour (!) quite a long time, if we remember that the general was going to liberate all of Chechnya in 2 hours.[7]

Grachev, as if responding to the conditions put forward by Basayev, added: "Negotiations with the leaders of the Chechen armed formations will no longer be conducted.[8] A "special operation" is required. I would not want the events in Budyonnovsk to affect the situation in Chechnya."

Thus, whatever one may say, "Alpha" was abandoned to the mercy of fate without aviation and even without artillery and tanks. True, one could hope for the support of infantry fighting vehicles and Shilka four-barreled anti-aircraft guns, capable of instantly destroying any stationary target with rapid fire.

General Gusev, going over in his mind various methods of combating terrorism, despite such a huge number of hostages in the building, and perhaps for this reason, since Aristotelian logic is inappropriate here, decided to dwell on the most effective so-called method of "heavy fire". Everyone involved in the fight against terrorism (and vast experience has already been accumulated) knows that terrorists who suddenly seize some object, due to the very specifics of their actions, cannot bring with them a large amount of ammunition. Well, let's say, no more than five or six automatic weapons per brother, plus a few grenades. At the same time, it is assumed that the anti-terrorist units have an unlimited supply of ammunition, which is constantly brought to them. Therefore, the anti-terrorist team, having opened heavy fire on the terrorists, either creates conditions when they cannot stick out from behind shelters and bursts into the building under cover of fire, or, having called back heavy fire, waits for the terrorists to run out of ammunition and takes them with their bare hands. This technique is good for everyone except for one thing: the life of the hostages was not taken into account at all, since all the victims were attributed to the dead terrorists.

Do not rush to just accuse General Gusev, and even more so his subordinates, of ruthlessness and similar things. "Alfa" people are servicemen and are only obliged to fulfill the orders received accurately and on time, as required by the Charter. If in recent years their thoughts have often gone somewhere beyond the limits of the orders received, then this is the result of a general decline in discipline not only in the army, but in the country as a whole.

Therefore, let us remember that the President ordered Erin on the phone, and a little later publicly on television: "Destroy all these bastards!" And although he did not explain who exactly he meant by this elegant term, one thing was clear: the President did not order anyone to be saved, but ordered to destroy the "bastard", most likely referring to Basayev's Chechens. What "Alpha" was going to do without much, we repeat, enthusiasm, but by the method of "heavy fire".

Alpha snipers were already shooting at the windows of the hospital from time to time, when curious heads, mostly female, appeared in them, and, as a rule, did not miss, confirming their high professional skills.

And once some armored personnel carrier, as if enraged, suddenly began to beat on the windows from his heavy machine gun. It took about fifteen minutes before they managed to calm the soldiers, who, for obvious reasons, lost their nerve. Therefore, somewhere

In the afternoon, Basayev announced that he had already accumulated about 30 corpses, the sight of which unnerved the living, and asked them to be taken out. Oddly enough, but the "siloviki" in charge of everything immediately agreed. Some strange ritual was observed.

A furniture van loaded with corpses drove out of the hospital yard. Throwing back the tailgate, he came close to the huge refrigerator that had driven up in reverse. Both cars were cordoned off by special forces soldiers. No one saw how the corpses of the dead were transferred from the van to the refrigerator, but the blood-drenched crumpled shoulder strap of an aviation lieutenant colonel fell to the ground. The cars were parked for a long time. The furniture van then drove back to the hospital. Later, an ominous rumor spread around Budyonnovsk that, having accepted the corpses from the refrigerator, they gave Basayev kicks with cartridges and brand new grenade launchers.

Meanwhile, desperate residents of the city, whose relatives were among the hostages in the hospital, gathered for a spontaneous rally, demanding that someone from the leadership of the "headquarters" explain to them the situation and the chances of releasing their loved ones. After two hours of hysterical screams, turning into mass sobbing, Nikolai Yegorov appeared before the unfortunate people. A camouflage uniform with a vest, like in January, would suit him very well now. In civilian clothes, the Minister of Nationalities did not look so convincing. Apparently, he was guided not so much by compassion for the Budennovites, but by the desire to ensure the surprise of the Alpha strike, since he swore that the highest goal for the ministers who arrived from Moscow was the life of the hostages.

For this purpose, he explained, the federal authorities are ready to pay any price. Everything will be done, Yegorov assured, in order to prevent the continuation of bloodshed. "The government, the Minister for Nationalities exclaimed pathetically, is ready to pay any amount for the lives of the hostages." Moreover, it is ready to provide them with an aircraft in Mineralnye Vody and ensure the possibility of their unhindered departure to any country ready to receive them.

Saying this, Yegorov already knew very well that Basayev had managed to refuse money and fly to "any country" three times during this time. He also knew that the assault was inevitable, that during it many relatives and friends of those people who eagerly listened to his words would die, and nevertheless, in the presence of several hundred residents, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Nationalities Nikolai Yegorov Budennovsk and journalists answered as follows:

The assault option is unacceptable. According to operational data, bundles of heavy bombs and canisters of gasoline are hung on all floors of the hospital. In the basement of the building, Yegorov explained with skill, there are 16 compressed oxygen cylinders lined with explosives. If all this explosive power works, there will be no one to save.

Having ensured the preservation of military secrets, Yegorov left the rally and hurried to a meeting held with the city leadership by the arrived governor of Stavropol, Yevgeny Kuznetsov.

The meeting revealed facts that created a hysterical atmosphere. According to the secret information received from the local and central leadership of the FSB, Budyonnovsk was bound to be subjected to a new attack by Chechen detachments in the very near future, hurrying to the rescue of Shamil Basayev. It was not possible to establish exactly who and why supplied Budyonnovsk with such a "misinformation", but, it seems, the FSB was engaged in this to create the appearance of its violent activity. However, they reached their goal, the city leadership was brought into a state of complete panic. Not embarrassed by the presence of high-ranking envoys of Moscow and the governor, the leaders of the city shouted that Budyonnovsk, in essence, was not guarded.



There is no electricity in microdistricts, they are not patrolled by anyone, even by the police; there is not a single armored personnel carrier at least at the crossroads. All forces were concentrated around the emergency headquarters in the building of the District Department of Internal Affairs, where a high-ranking army from Moscow gathered. It is hard to imagine what will happen if new detachments of the Chechen army break into the city?

Even now, when there are militants in the vicinity of the city (another misinformation received by the FSB), vital city facilities are only symbolically guarded. At any moment in any of them you can expect trouble.

Literally at these words, the bewildered head of the regional electrical networks ran into the office where the meeting was taking place, reporting that a battle had begun in the substation area with a new detachment of militants. The panic has reached its limit. Army units and a part of Alpha were immediately thrown into the battle area. Fortunately, we managed to quickly find out that there were no new fighters there. The shootout was started by two groups of OMON, who did not recognize each other in the dark.

Local chiefs were waiting for what the leaders who had arrived from Moscow would say. There was absolutely nothing to say. These were no longer leaders, but a disgusting scum of long lies and military failures, swept away to Budyonnovsk by the impending defeat ...

The local authorities, having lost all bureaucratic fear, began to tell the arriving ministers and generals everything that they thought of them. Was you told the opinion that

"We need to send them back to Moscow and deal with the release of the hostages ourselves and only through negotiations. Since they've blown it, we need to make concessions, otherwise the Moscow generals will do this to us here, we won't clear up!"

Yevgeny Kuznetsov hardly managed to bring the meeting to proper rank, but later this bureaucratic rebellion cost the governor his post.

At about 8 pm, a group of State Duma deputies headed by Sergei Kovalev arrived in Budyonnovsk. The group immediately went to the emergency headquarters, but was not allowed to go there by the guards. No deputy certificates, no demands, no persuasion helped.

"That's the order!" harsh guys in helmets, bulletproof vests and with machine guns answered.

Kovalev's group went to the administration building, where traces of the recent raid were clearly visible, and from there they tried to get through to the headquarters, which was located two blocks away in the building of the Internal Affairs Directorate.

All attempts did not lead to anything: either it was busy, or no one picked up the phone.

Then Kovalev called Yegor Gaidar in Moscow, asking him to use all his connections and influence in order for Kovalev and his comrades to be admitted to the headquarters, where they could prevent all attempts at a forceful solution and offer their services in negotiations with terrorists.

It is not known what kind of connections Yegor Gaidar used, but soon Yegorov himself called Kovalev. He greeted Sergei Kovalev very kindly, although he had recently publicly called him "Russia's enemy No. 1", and said that he would now come to the administration building for a meeting with delegates.

However, soon Yegorov called back again and, apologizing, said that he would not be able to come. He will not be able to accept Kovalev's group at his headquarters either. There are important meetings going on that are likely to go on all night. In the morning he is ready to meet with respected Sergei Adamovich. You don't have to worry about anything. He will call himself.

The Minister for Nationalities was courtesy itself. He said, although no one asked him about it, that significant progress had been made in negotiations with Basayev, that there was growing hope for a bloodless resolution of the issue of the release of the hostages.

"And in the morning," Egorov concluded, "the authority of the Kovalev group among the Chechens may well turn out to be useful, and then our joint work will begin."

The sweet voice in which the minnats spoke to Kovalev did not in the least calm the commissioner for human rights under the President of the Russian Federation, but rather the opposite. He knew Yegorov too well. However, fatigue from a long flight from Germany to Budyonnovsk took its toll. Kovalev fell on the sofa and fell asleep like the dead.

Soon, however, he was awakened by the rumble of artillery fire. Kovalyov looked at his watch: it was five minutes past six in the morning. The dawn broke. He jumped to his feet and ran to the window. Puffs of black smoke rose from the hospital.

Kovalev's first reaction was to immediately run to the scene. However, even the area near the Administration building was cordoned off and the deputies were not allowed through the chain. Climbing to the roof of the building, Kovalev saw flames escaping from the roof and windows of the city hospital. He realized that his worst forebodings had come true. "Alpha" began the assault.

Looking at a hysterical woman waving a sheet, and hearing her cries, begging for mercy, General Gusev himself was close to hysteria. He also wanted to fall to the ground and, roaring, beat his fists on the stones, beat his head on the scorched turf and swear in the way that Russian people know how to swear in a fit of violent despair.

The "heavy fire" tactics he chose led to the fact that Alpha ran out of ammunition and the terrorists responded with such fire as if ammunition depots for at least an entire combined arms division were deployed in the hospital.

The operation plan included three stages. At the first stage, they were not going to break into the hospital itself: the strategy of the operation was not to capture the terrorists, but to force them out of the building by "exhausting combat." At this stage, the Vega group was assigned the role of a cover.

At the second stage, according to the plan, "Alpha" burst into the building and started room fights with the Basayev detachment according to the method of the legendary sergeant Pavlov in Stalingrad.

At the third stage, the remnants of the "Basayevites" were supposed to be forced out into the street, where they were to be finished off by SOBR, army units and subdivisions of internal troops, who took the hospital into a triple cordon ring.

As usual, the whole operation was failed by the "emergency headquarters" itself, which gave an order over the radio in clear text to the "Ambulance" service to assemble all the brigades to the hospital building by 5 o'clock in the morning.

The text aired was: "Starting at 5 am. It is necessary to collect all the "carriages" to the object. As you know, the Chechens had Japanese walkie-talkies with encrypted channels (that is, it was impossible to intercept their communications), and in addition, they had an ambulance control room located in the hospital building. In addition, they listened to Alpha's conversations with each other and with support units, quickly realizing that Alpha could not come up with anything more elegant than "an exhausting battle with heavy fire". Namely, Basayev's detachment was best prepared for such a development of events.

No one knows what the Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information and the Radio Counterintelligence Service of the FSB, responsible for controlling the air, were doing at that moment, why they did not take elementary measures to keep communications secret.

First of all, General Gusev would like to know this.

As a result, already at 04.50 the movement of the "alfa" was discovered by the Chechens, who opened the same heavy fire that the "alpha" was preparing on the two advanced groups. Thus, the suddenness of the beginning of the assault, on which the outcome of the planned operation largely depended, was immediately lost. Moreover, the density of fire opened by the Chechens was such that the Alpha veterans had never seen, even during the legendary capture of Amin's palace in Afghanistan. A group trying to bypass the hospital from the other side was pinned to the ground by crossfire from two heavy DShK machine guns. Lieutenant Burlyaev, a sniper, fell under machine-gun fire when he ran to the aid of five fighters who were trying to advance to their original positions and got into a "fire bag" with a density of fire they had never seen before. The bullets, having passed between the armor of the body armor, pierced the side, turned the lung and liver. The lieutenant died instantly.

At the same moment, General Gusev heard on the radio the voice of Major Vladimir Sokolov, one of the most experienced fighters of Alpha. "P.... ts, it seems, the major said somehow casually. The arm was torn off." Later he was found dead. Lieutenant Dmitry Ryabinin was hit in the throat by a sniper bullet. More than 15 people were already injured. Alpha had never suffered such losses before, and the assault had not actually begun yet.

Only the advance to the starting positions has begun.

According to the plan of the operation, after occupying the starting positions, two BMPs and a four-barreled Shilka, firing 1,500 rounds per minute, were supposed to hit the hospital from their rapid-fire guns. Under the cover of this fire, the "Alfa" attacked the doors and windows of the first floor with grenade launchers and broke into the building while the BMP and "Shilka" smashed the windows and walls of the upper floors.

However, "Alpha" was put on the ground, having managed to reach its original positions, and the approaching armored vehicles, having opened deadly fire on the upper floors, were almost immediately destroyed by volleys of an easel grenade launcher. And "Alpha" was left completely without cover, choking, as one of the participants in the assault figuratively expressed, with blood and lead.

Gusev rushed to the headquarters and began to demand the support of armored vehicles from the army command. Army officials, hiding their eyes from the Alpha commander, assured that they no longer had serviceable vehicles here. All on the outer ring of the cordon of the city. These explanations looked more than strange, since there was simply no place around the premises of the "emergency headquarters" from the armored personnel carriers (APCs) and infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) standing close to each other, resembling a herd of frightened elephants in a poacher's paddock. Only one colonel honestly told Gusev: "I won't send my people into this inferno. If you want, take the cars and act.

Gusev ordered exactly this to be done. Having taken not very convenient positions, so as not to fall under the fire of Basayev's grenade launchers, the "Alfa" soldiers, riding on borrowed armored personnel carriers, opened fire on the windows of the hospital.

Then, according to one of the Alpha snipers, a nightmare began. The troops standing in the cordon, who were tormented by their conscience at the sight of the extermination of the Alpha, opened heavy fire on the hospital, however, from a fairly decent distance.

What Basayev warned about happened:

"I will not shoot anyone from women and children. They will be shot by the Russian units themselves when they storm the hospital." And so it happened. The Chechens placed the captured people at the windows and it was on them that all the fury of the fire opened by Alpha and other units fell. The hostages, mostly women, stood in the window openings under

muzzles of Chechen machine guns, shouting desperately, waving sheets, begging for a ceasefire. But no one heard them.

Beveled in bursts, torn apart by shells from military vehicles and four-barreled launchers at close range, they fell dead and wounded on the bloodied floor of hospital wards, strewn with broken bricks, broken glass and pieces of plaster from crumbling ceilings. Fires broke out in some rooms. The cries and pleas were in vain. Nobody heard them.

Nikolai Yegorov, furious and frightened, rushed about among the distraught officers and soldiers, himself resembling a madman, threatening to shoot everyone and everyone for no one knows what.

At this moment, Basayev, seeing that the assault had bogged down, without even really starting, sent three volunteer nurses to the Russian command with a proposal to cease fire.

When leaving the hospital, all three women were mowed down in bursts.

All the same, you need to pay tribute to Alpha. Even laid down by heavy fire on the ground, she did not lie idle. He is a professional for that and a professional to fire at any position of the body and weapons. But, fortunately (apparently, for the Alpha itself, too), somewhere by 9 in the morning, the Alpha soldiers ran out of cartridges and grenades. KAMAZ with ammunition, intended for Alfa, mysteriously disappeared somewhere and was found only the next day somewhere on the outskirts of the city, guarded by one policeman. A team like Alpha is entitled to its own little secrets.

"Alpha", escorted by friendly fire of the Chechens, withdrew under the cover of armored personnel carriers, albeit hastily, but with dignity.

Basayev ceased fire. It is possible that it was he who bought the "alpha" KAMAZ with ammunition, but there was nothing to waste them in vain.

And then everyone saw the hostages standing in the windows, screaming and waving sheets.

But this was not what worried General Gusev. He was worried about a completely legitimate question: how did Basayev get so much ammunition?! Where did he get heavy weapons, which "Alpha" found out only at the moment of opening fire.

Indeed, from where?

Alpha, which, since 1991, could not properly fulfill a single task entrusted to it, substituting politicians who naturally want to remain in the shadows, does not admit defeat and constantly insists that politicians are setting it up. An interesting game is going on, where all the participants with pleasure constantly step on the same rake.

Enraged General Gusev later came up with a version that the city hospital in Budennovsk was chosen by Basayev six months ago. In preparation for the operation, Chechen intelligence organized the Irbis cooperative at the hospital, which rented a basement there, where weapons and ammunition were brought in for several months ...

But be that as it may, the assault, for which they had been preparing for so long, failed.

After a while, two doctors with white sheets came out of the main building of the hospital. One of them, a female surgeon, began to beat in hysterics and shout:

"Do not shoot! Please don't shoot! There are children! A lot of children!"

At that moment, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy appeared at the "emergency headquarters" and arrived at

Budennovsk, together with the famous hypnotist Kashpirovsky, who said publicly in the Duma:

"If I come to Budyonovsk, all the hostages will be released." Kashpirovsky's abilities were known throughout the country.

As for Zhirinovskiy, who never had a special tact, when he saw General Yerin at the headquarters of the Minister of the Interior, he asked with some notes of gloating in his voice:

"Well? I heard the assault failed?

Army General Yerin never lost his temper. He did not begin to find out why the strictest order was violated not to allow anyone to the headquarters without special permission. For some reason, this order was strictly carried out when it came to Sergei Kovalev, and no one even dared to stop Zhirinovskiy.

"Why did it fail? Yerin asked with bewilderment in his voice. —

We are pushing the Chechens out of the building..."

Since Yerin, Yegorov and Stepashin had a "highest" command for the assault, they were more worried that the "command" could not be carried out. But there was still time. Therefore, a victorious report was sent to Moscow, drawn up, however, in slightly cautious terms.

It said that the bandits, having driven all the hostages to the top floor of the hospital, began their mass execution, at the same time making an attempt to leave the hospital and escape from the city. In the ensuing battle, the bandits were thrown back into the hospital building, "Alpha" captured the first floor, prevented the explosion of the building and began to seep into the upper floors. Complete neutralization of the bandits is expected in the near future. Somewhat later, it was added that Alfa managed to free 127 hostages.

In fact, if Alpha succeeded in doing anything, it was to take out its wounded and killed from under the fire.

The hospital building continued to burn. Suffocating smoke spread through the wards and the "terrible" heart of the warriors of Islam could not stand it. Basayev ordered the release of all women in labor, pregnant women and women who were in the hospital with young children.

It was an amazing sight when a column of women with babies and young children in their arms, women supporting their stomachs with their hands, where a new life was ripening, appeared from the gates of the hospital and moved towards the city. This real picture of the "victims coming out of hell" shocked everyone who saw it.

The young women were on the verge of complete nervous exhaustion, but nevertheless they all begged the soldiers not to shoot at the hospital, since the main victims of the shooting were the hostages. They assured that they and their children were treated well. These young, provincial women, almost girls, understood more than all the politicians who sat in the "emergency headquarters" and staged this massacre. All that the Chechens are asking is to stop exterminating their people and give freedom to their homeland.

Of course, they were not heard at the "headquarters", but only included the liberated women in childbirth among the achievements of "Alpha", so that the failed assault did not look completely senseless. And more than a hundred dead hostages, on the contrary, were attributed to Basayev. It was to save their lives that Alpha rushed to the assault, not sparing herself. In this form, the message was sent to Moscow and Halifax, where President Yeltsin was known to be. Having received

this triumphant message, the President once again, with a very pleased view of the whole world, confirmed that "the assault was undertaken by order, which he gave even before departure from Moscow." According to Yeltsin, the decision was agreed with the heads of the relevant ministries, in particular, with Yerin. Chernomyrdin also perked up, remaining behind the president in Moscow. All the past six months, the Prime Minister tried with all his might to distance himself from the Chechen massacre and even made timid attempts to stop this massacre by starting negotiations. In this regard, even the expression arose:

"The whole country is in Chechnya, and Chernomyrdin is all in white." This was not entirely true, but the prime minister, with his oil and gas industry, was very interested in seeing the madness in Chechnya finally come to an end.

Therefore, having received a message signed by three Budyonnovsk victors about an imminent victory, Chernomyrdin, as acting head of state, called for "the release of all hostages as soon as possible."

"I am convinced that even those who sympathize with the Dudayev regime, who condemned the war in Chechnya, today are clearly convinced of what is happening and what happened. Today I would like to say once again and draw everyone's attention to those who are involved in all these cases. We need to stop... Once again, I can say that the organizers who planned this operation, planned this terrorist act, planned to introduce destabilization in the south of our country, in the North Caucasus, that a guerrilla war and a bloody chain would stretch throughout Russia. It won't be! There will be no bloody chains and there will be no guerrilla wars in the country. The government has done everything and will continue to do everything to ensure order in the country. Today in Budyonnovsk there are representatives of the government, authorized persons who are endowed with all the rights to negotiate, to sit down at the negotiating table."

Nobody understood what Chernomyrdin wanted to say. What negotiations, with whom negotiations?

After all, the President just spoke in Halifax and gave a stern order, you understand, to exterminate everyone. He even expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the assault was delayed: he wanted to lead it himself from the aircraft. In vain did G7 leaders convince Yeltsin that decades of events in Ulster, the Middle East and elsewhere showed that a problem like the Chechen one could not be solved by force. It is necessary to conduct negotiations, albeit very difficult and lengthy ones, but negotiations. Just take Israel and the Palestinians. Could anyone have imagined that Rabin and Arafat would sit at the same table? Yeltsin listened, smiled and nodded. He gave the impression of a man very pleased with himself. There was not a hint of concern on his face.

The press secretary of the President, Sergei Medvedev, said a little later that after the tragedy of the civilian population in the city of Budyonnovsk, which took place before the eyes of the whole world, there could no longer be talks about any negotiations with the Chechens. There can be only one conversation with the bandits: either they surrender and the court determines their guilt, or they are destroyed.

For some reason, few people then paid attention to such a different assessment of the situation by the President in Halifax and the Prime Minister in Moscow, where Chernomyrdin had already unambiguously said about the need for negotiations.

There is no doubt that by that time Chernomyrdin already had information that the President did not have. The awareness of the President about many events taking place in the country is generally a separate and detective topic, since there is no more

serious state crime than deliberate disinformation of the head of state. And this means that the prison is crying practically throughout the entire presidential entourage, including the astrological department of the Security Service...

As for Chernomyrdin, despite the fact that the mass media created for him the image of a kind of mediocrity: a C grade student at school, an assistant to a drilling foreman who graduated from a university with great difficulty, capable of dealing with only economic issues with sin in half, it was necessary to always keep in mind that in the system of the late CPSU, and even more so in the system of Byzantine intrigues of the Yeltsin administration, only a clever and, most importantly, well-informed politician could rise to Chernomyrdin's heights, who did not have to finish school with a gold medal.

On the day of the raid on Budyonnovsk, that is, only three days ago, Chernomyrdin, answering a question about the possibility of just such a development of events, as everyone remembered well, answered:

"This will not happen! We will never allow!"

Now, in approximately the same terms, he spoke of the "bloody chain" that had already entangled Russian cities: "This will not happen! There will be no "bloody chains!", but not because "we will not allow this," but because "we will sit down at the negotiating table."

Indeed, the "bloody chain" was already stretching from one Russian city to another, creating an as yet invisible web. She has not yet been seen by numerous special services, and, moreover, by the President, who is in Halifax. To be honest, Chernomyrdin did not see her at that moment either, but he already felt her in his throat.

By this time, the president had received a new report from Budyonnovsk, signed by General of the Army Erin as a senior in rank. Yeltsin gladly shared this news with reporters in the lobby of the Citadel Hotel. If in the morning the President was cheerful and cheerful, now he looked very tired. It was clear that he was sick again. But nevertheless, he joyfully reported: "Erin reports that the Chechens changed into white coats in the hospital and tried to escape. They were all laid down, you know." And the President happily

laughed.

Then Yeltsin stunned journalists with truly sensational news.

"We received a message," he said, that Dudayev had asked for political asylum in Turkey. We won't mind. Let him go where he wants. If only away from Russia!"

Who slipped Yeltsin such a "cartoon", which of the many special services, apparently, will remain one of the secrets of the Chechen war.

Although the Turkish embassy in Canada, and then the Turkish Foreign Ministry immediately denied this "canard", this refutation did not reach the President, probably due to a progressive malaise. Moreover, the faithful Kozyrev, now reminiscent of the habits of the chief eunuch at the emir's harem, confirmed that

"Yes, we have very reliable information about Dudayev's flight abroad."

At the same time, US President Clinton received a message through the channels of the State Department and the CIA that not one assault, but two, had already failed in Budyonnovsk. Clinton postponed the press conference he was due to give with Yeltsin and had a quick meeting with his aides. Long gone are the days when any "sneeze" from Moscow caused increased anxiety in Washington: presidents interrupted vacations, urgently (often at night) the National Security Council met; the army was brought from the state of 5th readiness immediately to the 2nd, and journalists stormed the doors of the State Department, trying to find out at least

any news and the like; Now, and especially after the start of the war in Chechnya, Moscow cuisine, by and large, did not interest anyone in the States. Moscow political news was printed on the fifth or sixth page of newspapers, and even such magazines as Time and Newsweek could not print a single message from their correspondents from Moscow in several issues in a row.

However, this time the message was very disturbing. An American intelligence resident in Russia reported that the Chechen raid on Budyonnovsk was merely a red herring for the launch of Operation Red Chain, which, if allowed to begin, could bring Russia into complete chaos within two to three weeks. According to the resident and the director of the CIA, who approved his actions, the Federal Security Service of Russia has already been informed about this. However, given her very low level of professionalism and her pronounced tendency to sabotage, it's hard to expect her to be able to bring the situation under control. The CIA recommended that Clinton inform President Yeltsin about everything in Halifax, since in this particular case there was no time to lose.

Is it possible to draw any connection between the "Red Chain" that American intelligence reported from Russia and the "Blood Chain" that Chernomyrdin spoke of? It is possible that having received this information from the Americans through the FSB (and, possibly, through other channels), the Russian prime minister deliberately changed the name, since in this combination the words "red" and "bloody" were not at all synonymous and had a very strong influence on the independence of Chechnya. distant relationship.

For a boil that has jumped up on the buttock may well arrange sepsis for the whole organism, especially for such a weakened one. And no one's plans included such a quick death of the patient.

In the meantime, shooting continued in Budennovsk, since the victorious reports sent to the center needed some kind of concrete embodiment. The offended Alpha no longer participated in the hostilities, leaving the honor of mastering the hospital to the special forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

"Job fear paralyzes the mind first," one observer joked grimly.

A new attempt to take the hospital building by storm began at 14.30.

The building was on fire in several places. Later, a version was born that the soldiers, fearing that all the hostages would be burned alive, went on the assault. Thus, so that the hostages would not burn out, they decided to shoot them, as the unfortunate continued to be kept at the windows.

All this was in broad daylight, in front of the relatives clustered around the hospital.

From the windows of the hospital, the hostages continued frantically waving white sheets, desperately shouting: "Don't shoot! Don't kill us!" These cries were heard for a quarter, they could not drown out even volley fire.

Finally, having lost another 10 soldiers killed and 30 wounded, killing about a hundred hostages, the "triumphants" ordered a ceasefire, resuming negotiations with Basayev, again offering him money and a plane to any country. Basayev replied that he would no longer negotiate, but asked that a fire brigade be sent to the hospital to put out the fire. Which was done immediately.

There was an ominous silence, broken from time to time by single shots somewhere in the city. It is not known who shot whom there.



It was 15:20. June 17, 1995.

"Saturday, June 17," the Moskovskie Novosti correspondent reported from Budyonnovsk, "will go down in the annals of the history of the fight against terrorism as a day of madness, unprofessionalism of the military and the complete idiocy of their superiors."

Urgently gathered in Pyatigorsk, the Cossack circle under the chairman of the former regional committee secretary, and now "ataman" Martynov, presented Basayev with an ultimatum: if he does not release the hostages before 00 hours on June 18, the Cossacks "catch and destroy three times as many Chechens living in the Stavropol region."

"Spontaneous" pogroms of the Chechen population were already going on in the region. They were thrown into the street, and the Cossacks, riding bulldozers, demolished their houses. Many of these Chechens have never been to Chechnya at all. Born and educated in Russia, they worked in the region for many years.

All this time, the group of Sergei Kovalev, unlike the group of Zhirinovskiy, was not only not allowed into the headquarters, but was not allowed through the cordon at all. The deputies only heard intermittent shooting, which died down at about half past three. Kovalev called Yegor Gaidar to Moscow several times, but he admitted that he could not do anything under the given conditions. It was already evening when the phone suddenly rang in the room where the group of the Ombudsman was. Sergei Kovalev picked up the receiver and, to his great surprise, heard the voice of Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. The prime minister said that Kovalev was given the authority to negotiate with Basayev on behalf of the government. "Take whoever you want with you," the head of government ordered, and act. There is no time to lose!"

Kovalev immediately called back to headquarters. This time they immediately picked up the phone. The head of the Internal Affairs Directorate of the Stavropol Territory, General Medveditsky, turned out to be at the phone. The general told Kovalev that Yerin, Stepashin and Yegorov were very busy at the moment to be able to receive Sergei Kovalev, but gave him a phone number where he could contact Shamil Basayev in the hospital. Kovalev and Basayev had known each other since the storming of Grozny. Kovalev offered the Chechen colonel himself and his group as hostages in exchange for the release of civilians. Basayev was not very happy about such a prospect (destroying Kovalev and the members of his group in the depths of their souls dreamed of all the leaders gathered in Budennovsk), but promised to think about it. At about 8:30 pm, Basayev announced that he was ready to negotiate the release of the hostages with State Duma deputy Sergei Kovalev. To do this, he demands a temporary cessation of hostilities on the territory of Chechnya and confirmation from the federal authorities of Kovalev's authority to conduct such negotiations.

Yegor Gaidar, at the request of Kovalev, tried all evening to contact the prime minister, but he did not succeed. Time passed, approaching midnight, and complete uncertainty continued to hang over Budyonnovsk like a theatrical curtain before the last act of the tragedy.

And on the other side of the earth, in Halifax, where the time was approaching 18.00, the long-awaited joint press conference of the presidents of the United States and Russia: Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin began.

The President of Russia was in a state of extreme malaise. It was supposed to be about lofty matters like international nuclear security and mutually beneficial cooperation, in the coverage of which all politicians like to speak in general, non-committal terms. But the journalists were only interested in Chechnya and, in particular, the issue of the hostages in Budyonnovsk. Overcoming the indisposition and raising his hands to the sky, the President almost shouted:

"Chechnya is a center of international terrorism, corruption and mafia!"

"Chechens," he continued, waving his arms, "

it's all gangsters, you know!" The President twisted his finger around his own head.

"These black bandages, you know, they put them on their heads! We will destroy them all!"

While the bewildered correspondents were trying to figure out why the green headbands of the Chechens with the text from the Koran presented themselves as black to the ill President, the President himself strained his eyes with a last effort of will and saw the desperate signs that Kozyrev and Medvedev's press secretary were giving him, remaining behind the scenes.

Raising his finger to his lips, Yeltsin obediently nodded several times and, in a calmer voice, informed the audience again that Dudayev had applied for political asylum in Turkey. This statement was immediately refuted by the US President's staff, but Yeltsin did not seem to hear it. At this time, one of the Russian TV journalists asked Clinton whether he had changed his opinion about Chechnya as a result of the seizure of a hospital in southern Russia? Infuriated again and preventing Clinton from answering, Yeltsin, in a state of increased nervousness, according to American correspondents, again almost yelled that he himself was a hostage of this crisis, and his friend Bill supported the Russian counterinsurgency. Yeltsin's voice rose to the level of a scream. "General Dudayev," he stubbornly repeated, asked for political asylum in Turkey and Turkey agreed. We don't care where he goes!" However, Yeltsin's attempt to lean on the friendly shoulder of Bill Clinton by claiming that "my friend Bill" supports Russian methods of suppressing Chechen rebels did not work this time.

President Clinton, who visibly turned his head away when "friend Boris" breathed in his direction and remained gloomy during Yeltsin's monologue, declared that his position on the Chechen conflict was absolutely not what Yeltsin ascribed to him. Of course, he is against all terrorism, but not unilaterally, not in favor of some against others.

Terrorism, to use the word, began with the attack of the Russian armed forces on Chechnya, it was inherent in the whole way of waging this war; what happened in Budennovsk is just a logical development of events.

"The behavior of the President in Halifax," one of the Russian journalists reported to Moscow, "

his empty and pompous speeches, his irresponsible statements such as fantastic lies about Dudaev's intention to flee to Turkey, the scene he played at a meeting with Clinton depicting "thugs in black (?) armbands", which was even more embarrassing to look at than at Berlin conducting , unexpectedly turned out to be good luck for the country, since Chernomyrdin remained in Moscow "on the farm".

Late in the evening of June 17, a Russian television crew was urgently summoned to the government building. The time was approaching midnight, and frightened journalists wondered what could happen. What government statement is going to air now? This has never happened before, even during the Caribbean crisis, when the USSR and the USA were teetering on the brink of nuclear war.

What happened now? Perhaps, in revenge for the failure in Budyonovsk and for everything else, the army and special services, which went into a rage, decided to unleash a world war according to the principle: seven troubles, one answer?

What TV journalists have witnessed, and through them the whole country and the whole world,

really had no analogue in history. At least in the history of the fight against terrorism.

Picking up the phone, the prime minister said:

Shamil Basaev? Chernomyrdin says...

The Prime Minister of the country PERSONALLY began negotiations with the "head of a gang of terrorists", agreeing to fulfill, if not all, then the main conditions put forward by Basayev. No one expected such a development of events.

Despite the fact that during the past six months Viktor Chernomyrdin tried to distance himself from the Chechen massacre, he, as head of government, did not always succeed. Public statements by the Prime Minister, especially recently, were getting tougher.

On the eve of the attack on Budennovsk, on June 6, while in Krasnodar, the prime minister, standing against the backdrop of a grinning Nikolai Yegorov, said that "there is no one to negotiate in Chechnya." He had already tried all options. "You can't negotiate with bandits," the prime minister said morally.

The next day, June 7, Chernomyrdin again spoke out on Chechnya, saying that the events taking place there were, in fact, an armed uprising against the unity of Russia, and therefore should be suppressed by military force.

"The war in Chechnya, the Prime Minister stressed, will continue in the same volume. You can't negotiate with bandits."

And, finally, Chernomyrdin found himself a partner for negotiations.

If quite recently the most educated lawyer Imaev, and the most intelligent journalist Udugov, and the most intelligent politician Yandarbiev, and the modest warrior Maskhadov, were categorically considered bandits, not to mention Dudayev himself, then what can be said about Basayev, in whose hands, no matter how to him were treated, there was the blood of more than three hundred killed and maimed civilians.

And then the negotiations quickly began, ending with the triumphant return of Shamil Basayev's detachment to Chechnya, where he became a national hero with no less glory than his legendary namesake, Imam Shamil; a ceasefire in Chechnya, quickly established negotiations, behind the verbal tinsel of which only one thing is clear: RUSSIA LOST THE WAR IN ONE OF ITS PROVINCE! For ritual disarmament, Moscow is ready to pay Chechnya an indemnity in the amount of 6 billion dollars, having previously squandered the same amount for the conduct of hostilities.

What happened?

Both our and foreign press vied with each other to comment on this incredible event.

"If the point has been made," wrote Kronid Lyubarsky, a political observer for Novoye Vremya, it is only in the question of what kind of regime that carried out the invasion of Chechnya. For six months, he refused to listen to the voices of those in our country and abroad who demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities and the start of direct negotiations with those who alone depend on the possibility of a settlement with the government of Dzhokhar Dudayev, no matter how we treat him. Arguments about the exorbitant price that one has to pay with the lives of Russians were not taken into account. They laughed at the words about the violation of human rights. About Russia's loss of face in the eyes of the world

communities didn't care. It was decided to ignore the heavy burden that the Chechen adventure places on the economy. They refused to hear about the split caused in the society by the war.

They began to listen only when their strength was opposed by strength. A typical reaction of a criminal godfather.

The Russian authorities provoked a criminal war and waged it with criminal methods, actually carrying out the genocide of the Chechens, arousing in them the anger, hatred and dull despair of people who have nothing to lose, forcing even their former allies in Chechnya to take up arms and join the ranks of the resistance.

Illiterate and self-confident, knowing neither the history nor the national character of the people, they did not understand and did not want to understand that throughout the territory of the former Russian (and Soviet) empire there was no place where unleashing a war against the people would be more madness than in Chechnya. . Intoxicated with their strength and power, they thought that it was possible with impunity to pour flamethrowers into basements where children were hiding, bomb schools and hospitals, torture in filtration camps, loot and rape without causing retaliation. For six months, the Russian army did things in Chechnya that the saboteurs in Budennovsk did not dare to do.

Almost all journalists, analysts, political scientists, scientists and leading politicians warned that the Chechen adventure would absolutely inevitably lead to a full-scale civil war, which would spread beyond the borders of Chechnya to Russia ... The government and generals were completely deaf to these warnings. Grachev and Kulikov, Erkin, Stepashin and Yegorov, with their characteristic impudent categoricalness, laughingly dismissed them. Chernomyrdin resolutely rejected such a possibility literally a day before the start of the tragedy. We now see the price of their insight, intellect and political intuition... The "siloviki", together with the government, have demonstrated a complete inability to fulfill their direct tasks, to act at least to a small degree professionally. The threat of the war spilling over into Russia has been known for a long time. A heavily armed large detachment, in broad daylight, overcoming hundreds of kilometers of territory flooded with intelligence officers, internal and regular troops, this is not a killer lurking in the entrance, appearing without warning.

When the tragedy had already happened and it was no longer possible not to "take action", the first and only thing they decided to do was to storm the hospital, in which the price of destroying Basayev and his comrades could only be the destruction of all the hostages. But what was the destruction of another thousand to them, who killed tens of thousands in Chechnya ... "

However, having made an excellent preliminary analysis, Lyubarsky, when asked why the authorities nevertheless agreed to negotiations, answers with some naivety: Chernomyrdin was afraid that the Duma would send the government and him personally into resignation and "political death" would come for him. We have seen what the Duma's timid attempt to do in this way led to when President Yeltsin, grinning, remarked: "Let the Duma sign its own verdict."

Why, but Chernomyrdin was not at all afraid of this!

"In Budennovsk, the influential French newspaper Monde noted, the Kremlin, which tried to use hostage-taking to turn public opinion against the Chechens, tried nothing else, being unable to use force. And now he has to pretend that he is ready for negotiations. For the Russian authorities to agree to negotiate, it took a bloody and failed assault on the hospital by the Russian armed forces, a massacre in the hospital itself. The Chechens refused the money and the offered opportunity to escape and

achieved a cessation of hostilities and the immediate start of negotiations with Moscow.

Of course, one can draw a historical analogy. The sight of seven Ikarus buses, on which Shamil Basayev's detachment, having left 182 fresh graves in Budennovsk, returned to Chechnya under the enthusiastic cries of local residents, made the same impression on the nervous Russian society as the sight of seven surrendered Russian ships entering under Japanese flags to Maizuru Bay to the enthusiastic cries of the local population, who poured ashore. This prompted the Russian government to end the war with Japan, which was also planned to end in two weeks with the capture of Tokyo.

But Japan was still a foreign country, not its own province.

And if the humiliation from the shame of that time is not forgotten until now, then, I dare to assure you, the humiliation from the shame with which the valiant Colonel Basayev covered the wings of the Russian eagle will also never be forgotten. And also, generation after generation will ask themselves the question: how could this happen?!

This is not about how the raid on Budennovsk could have happened, but about how Basayev, having carried out this raid, could triumphantly return to his native mountains on the seven excursion Ikaruses kindly provided to him, over which the green flags of the Free Wolf were hoisted ", and all the "iron rings" of the cordon resignedly parted before him?

"Truly Akbar!" as one journalist noted, giving Colonel Vorozhtsov a receipt "on voluntary joining Basayev's bandit group."

Perhaps the closest to the truth was the German magazine Der Spiegel, always prudent and carefully checking the information, noting in the editorial article:

"Doubts have already begun whether the tragedy in Budennovsk was really the result of a desperate sortie by the Chechens, or whether influential Russian circles had a hand in all this."

Even before the start of the conflict, American intelligence reported that it was not a war with Chechnya that was being prepared, but a war on the territory of Chechnya between two polar Russian political forces. At the same time, the various Russian units that arrived in Chechnya under the tricolor Russian flag and under the hammer and sickle red banner of the former USSR looked like the tiny head of an iceberg. At any contact, these units always opened fire on each other, and during the days of the months-long assault on Grozny, they simply destroyed each other with allegedly opened by mistake artillery fire or erroneously directed aircraft.

But, I repeat, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The USSR, the last medieval empire, having crumbled into feudal domains, gave rise, as an inevitable consequence of its collapse, to a huge number of variegated robber barons. General Dudayev, who managed to concentrate the attention of the country and then the whole world on himself, was far from the only and not the most dangerous, since he acted under the banner of the sacred right of any people to self-determination. He himself became a toy in the hands of those forces that set themselves much larger tasks.

The fire of war began to fade when American intelligence received a message about the start of Operation Red Chain (or Bloody Chain, as Chernomyrdin let slip about it).

The "Red Chain" is what frightened all the inhabitants of the Kremlin, and not some kind of Duma or

the upcoming elections, for which they all do not care in the highest degree ...

After Sergei Kovalev was finally admitted to the hospital and began negotiations with Basayev, during which both of them constantly consulted with Chernomyrdin, a lot of famous people visited Budyonnovsk.

Some, of course, were let through three cordon rings around the city. Journalist Natasha Alyakina, for example, who had all the permits and accreditations, was shot in the back right at the checkpoint of the second ring, having previously wished her a happy journey. But not everyone acted so cool.

Even Stanislav Govorukhin appeared in Budennovsk. He was not admitted to the hospital, but he walked between the burned-out and intact armored personnel carriers, constantly exclaiming: "My God, what a mess!"

Against the backdrop of Govorukhin, Zhirinovskiy, Kashpirovskiy and other equally well-known persons, the appearance in Budennovsk in the midst of negotiations between Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Colonel Basaev of the Ichkerian Army, our old acquaintance, Colonel-General Vladislav Achalov, somehow passed unnoticed. A renowned commander of army special forces and parachute sabotage units, in October 1993 he tried to establish the defense of the White House, but was outplayed and neutralized by "presidential sharpeners" like Colonel Terekhov and Private Baburin, having been imprisoned for some time in a pre-trial detention center. Having soon been released under an amnesty, the dashing general, although he gave a subscription to no longer engage in politics, vowed to take revenge and take revenge.

That robber baron is bad who does not dream of becoming a king, especially when the king himself is constantly, you know, unwell.

In what capacity Achalov came to Budennovsk and how he was passed through the three rings of the outer cordon of the city, it does not matter much, because, having arrived in Budennovsk, the retired colonel general was not only passed through the three inner cordon rings, but also into the hospital itself.

It is important to note here that it was not at all those who were allowed by Generals Erin, Stepashin and Yegorov who were allowed to enter the captured hospital, but only those whom Colonel Basayev wanted to see.

Zhirinovskiy and Govorukhin were also allowed to pass through the "rings" as deputies. The "siloviki" let them through, but Basayev didn't let them in, and nothing happened.

In the case of Achalov, there was complete unity of views, for it was clear to everyone that the general had come personally to express his admiration for a man whom he had the right to consider one of his most capable students.

Immediately after General Achalov's visit to Budyonnovsk, an anonymous specialist "on coup d'état, sabotage and international terrorism" surfaced on the pages of the capital's press, whom a newspaper employee asked to comment on the events in Budyonnovsk.

"As a professional, and not without pride, the anonymous official declared, I can testify that the hostage-taking operation in Budyonnovsk was brilliantly prepared and carried out. Analyzing the actions of saboteurs, I do not find impromptu. Each of them performed their task, which made it possible to realize their plans very quickly. I will give just one example. Arriving in Budennovsk, Basayev's detachment dispersed into several groups, each of which performed its functions: some shot at the police station, others took hostages, etc. Nevertheless, at the appointed time, they all gathered in one designated place in

city hospital. If there had not been a pre-worked out and agreed plan, everything would have ended in chaotic and fruitless actions for the saboteurs. A clear example of this is the assaults by the Russian army on Grozny in December-January, when military units exterminated each other, having no idea who was where and what was attacking.

Both the official and Basayev's versions of how such a large detachment moved through the territory, which is under the special control of law enforcement agencies, do not stand up to scrutiny. Obviously, two hundred fighters cannot be accommodated in two trucks, who, moreover, must carry with them a fairly large arsenal of weapons, ammunition and explosives ... This means that either the saboteurs were not traveling in two trucks, but in a large convoy (at least 79 vehicles), or weapons and ammunition were stockpiled at a designated location in Budyonnovsk.

By whom? Chechens in tracksuits who were reported as having arrived in advance? Firstly, how many "athletes" had to come to Budyonnovsk to bring such an arsenal in their hands ?!

Secondly, let's imagine that a large group of Chechens arrived in a small provincial town, where the majority of the population knows each other. This would inevitably cause a wary reaction from local residents, and even more so from law enforcement officials who regularly receive orientation about possible terrorist attacks from Dudayev's people. . Considering the difficult relationship the FSB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the army are in, it is not difficult to assume that the employees of these structures would race to report to the top about a suspicious concentration of Chechens.

it turns out that to prepare caches with weapons and ammunition (if the Basayevites did not bring all this with them) there should have been those people (or structures) who would not arouse suspicion either among the local population, or among representatives of the police, the FSB and the army.

I would especially like to say about the march of the Basayevites. The penetrating power of money, given the state of affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, can indeed be impressive. But in this case, it cannot be exaggerated ....

Such a man, experienced in such matters, as Basayev, could not set off, relying solely on the venality of Russian guards. The presence of huge funds entails an even greater danger for carriers than weapons. If the Basayevites had exposed their bags of money at their first post in Chechnya, the constantly marauding OMON fighters would have immediately shot them down, confiscating the money in their favor. Most likely, the Basayevites were provided with a corridor for passage ... "

Let us add on our own behalf that there is not one corridor, but many, through which the "red chains" of a deadly disease passed, covering the country like a rash.

And only when the explosion of the Budyonnovsky tragedy illuminated the surroundings, this rash was noticed. The only salvation was to try to return to the situation that existed on December 11, 1994, no longer thinking about the possible consequences of the most shameful military-political defeat in the war against our own people.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide details of Operation Red Chain for many reasons. First, we don't know everything. And what is known should be clarified, requiring a more objective analysis. And, of course, we are afraid to let our sources down. But it seems that what has been said and quoted is enough for the reader to conclude for himself how weak and vulnerable our homeland is, if an enemy with an immeasurably lower weight category can, at least temporarily, knock it down. However, in order for the most obtuse to understand the danger better, we will give only one (out of a thousand) possible scenarios for the further development of events.

In the course of combat, and even more so sabotage operations, it is not at all necessary to carry out any measures to deter the enemy. Often it is enough just to announce them either officially or with the help of an inspired leak of information.

For example, in order to close some strait for navigation to the enemy, it is not necessary to lay mines there. It is enough to announce that they have been delivered. It is unlikely that the enemy will enter this strait without carrying out a time-consuming and risky mine-sweeping operation.

It is not necessary to poison wells in the zone of action of the enemy army. We must announce that they are poisoned. And human psychology is such that even if one of the enemy soldiers dares to get drunk, he will definitely be sent to the hospital with all the symptoms of poisoning.

Those who listened to Shamil Basayev's numerous "post-Budennov" interviews, which he gave to our and foreign journalists, heard his statements about the presence of containers with radioactive, biological and bacteriological weapons. When asked where he got them from, Basayev, with his characteristic feigned spontaneity, answered: "Now you can buy anything in Russia. Let me buy you some money." With the same spontaneity and sincerity, he told one of the correspondents back in Budennovsk: "If you have 30 thousand dollars, put on a green armband, put the machine gun on your knees and go, don't be afraid of anything. They will let you through to the Kremlin itself and let you into the Kremlin."

But in this case, it doesn't matter if he has these containers or not. The main thing is that Basayev announced he has them.

Now he no longer even has to make risky raids on Russian cities. It is enough to announce that, say, a container with bacteriological weapons has been opened at Taganka in Moscow, and a plague bacillus (or something more terrible) has gone for a walk around the capital. The authorities, of course, will immediately and categorically refute this. But given the traditional faith of the people in the statements of the authorities, one can imagine what kind of panic will begin in the capital!

Or announce that a container with a radioactive substance has been opened in St. Petersburg, and since Geiger counters are crackling everywhere in the city like in Hiroshima in 1945, one can imagine how much anyone will believe the authorities that nothing happened. I'm not talking about the fact that thousands of people will begin to show symptoms of the declared diseases and lesions. The panic-stricken population, sweeping away the OMON cordons, will rush to flee the cities: Muscovites to the north, St. Petersburg residents to the south. In such a simple way, given the nervous state of the population, you can quickly bring the whole country into a state of chaos.

And if, as the same Basayev promised, at the same time suicide bombers are used, then it's generally scary to think how all this could end. So, believe me, Chernomyrdin knew what he was doing, and the last thing he was afraid of was that the Duma would vote a vote of no confidence in his cabinet. If in Russia the rulers will ever be afraid of various "votes" at all, then not earlier than in 300 years.

In order not to go further along the wrong road of military-political forecasts and fantasies, for now it can be stated that as a result of Basayev's raid (or "terrorist attack" as you like), the massacre in Chechnya was stopped, at least temporarily. Russia was forced to sit down at the negotiating table with representatives of Dudayev. Dudayev himself is also alive and well, which, apparently, he wishes for everyone. While he is still on the All-Russian wanted list, but not alone. After Budyonnovsk, an all-Russian search was also announced for Basayev, which does not prevent the latter from giving interviews almost daily. His mood is cheerful Dudayev promoted the "national hero of Ichkeria" to the generals.

The Russian army is actually abandoned in Chechnya to the mercy of fate. She hasn't been for a long time



not the ministers, not even their deputies, but some previously unknown generals with anxious faces and shifty eyes. For what thousands of soldiers and officers died, and other thousands became disabled, no one can clearly explain, since General Dudayev, as he was the president of Ichkeria, remained.

No one can explain why the fates of several hundred thousand Russian residents of Chechnya, who fled from Grozny and lost their loved ones, housing and property, were crippled. It is possible that their deportation was carried out in such a cunning way in order to make Dudayev's Ichkeria not only independent, but also mono-ethnic. So that they would not climb to him with various nonsense from Moscow, as in the Baltic countries. There are no Russians and no one to oppress.

Perhaps only Shakhrai alone answered all these questions when he testified at the hearings on Chechnya in the Constitutional Court. He said the invasion was necessary to forestall Dudayev, who was about to invade Russia. And he presented some document with Dudayev's analogue of the "Barbarossa plan". The stunned Court recognized ALL PRESIDENT'S DECREES as CONSTITUTIONAL, thus committing the second crime against Russia in less than three years of its existence.

The first happened when the Constitutional Court, still chaired by Valery Zorkin, prevented the CPSU from being recognized as a criminal organization, saved the "party gold" in foreign banks, and doomed the country to convulsions, the duration of which cannot be determined temporarily.

The second, chaired by Tumanov, the Court made today, creating a precedent that gives the President the right to bombard the territory of Russia at his own discretion, even in a state of severe indisposition.

From all this one can draw one not very comforting conclusion.

Created by the joint genius of Lenin and Stalin, the terrible machine that runs only on fuel from human corpses has by no means ceased to exist in free Russia. She only slightly changed her color, becoming instead of red in places pink, and in places brown. Shed a little, but retained her former appetites. She loves to kill us one by one and all together. PRIEST Me with an axe. Journalist Kholodov with a bomb. TV presenter Listyev shot in the back of the head. Banker Kantor knife. Entrepreneur Kivilidi with poison. Thousands of Russians (Chechens and Russians) with bombs, shells and napalm. The machine is gaining momentum and it needs more and more fuel for our lives and the lives of our children.

We got so carried away with abstract reflections that we forgot about the three main characters books:

Yegorov, Erina and Stepashin, who so bravely started the war in Chechnya and whom capricious fate brought to Budyonnovsk, where the war has so far ended.

Immediately after the start of negotiations between Chernomyrdin and Basayev, all this "troika" started a new farce on the topic:

"Who gave the order for the assault, during which many hostages died?" The game was started, apparently, in order to demonstrate his loyalty to the President, since everyone knew that Boris Yeltsin personally ordered the assault even before flying to Halifax.

This game was accepted with pleasure by the media, which asked from all channels and pages:

"Who gave the order for the assault?"

Since Yerin, Stepashin and Yegorov had already made it clear that they were ready to shield the person of the head of state with their bodies, all the fury of public opinion, fueled by scenes of continuous funerals in Budyonnovsk, turned out to be directed against them. Now it was necessary to find out which of them specifically gave this order.

Since Yegorov ("the head of the emergency headquarters") was nominally considered senior, the first thing they turned to was him. Minnats replied that, being a civilian, he had no right to give any orders at all, except to employees of his ministry, who, of course, did not participate in the assault.

In the same way, Stepashin declared that no one in Budyonnovsk was subordinate to him, except for secret agents, who could not storm anyone.

And then all eyes turned to the unfortunate army general Viktor Yerin. The bewildered Minister of the Interior, who, like his cunning colleagues, could not assure the public that no one was subordinate to him, at the beginning did not find anything better than to substitute his two deputies: Abramov and Yegorov (namesake of the Minnats). Then, apparently realizing that the deputies could hardly have ordered anything over his head, Yerin hinted that the entire assault was an improvisation by the Alpha commander, General Gusev. Then, somewhat coming to his senses, Yerin said that there had been no assault at all, but that there had been a "squeezing out of the Chechens." Finally, the minister edited his reply as follows:

"There was no assault. There was no assault, but there was a movement of special forces that liberated part of the secondary buildings on the territory of the hospital complex.

Then all three worked to get Basayev buses to return to Chechnya. Ichkerian colonel demanded that the buses must be with soft seats and with curtains on the windows.

In the departments of Yegorov, Erin and Stepashin, of course, there was no such luxury. In the end, the buses were borrowed by some commercial enterprise that wished to remain anonymous. However, some people claimed that these buses had been standing at the entrance to Budyonnovsk since June 14th. They were guarded by three masked soldiers. But that doesn't really matter either.

The slap in the face received by Moscow in Budyonnovsk was so resounding and humiliating that it did not leave anyone indifferent, including the State Duma, which unanimously voted for distrust of the government and thirsty for the blood of the "siloviki".

Once again faced with a choice: shoot tanks at the parliament or expel the disgraced ministers in Budyonnovsk. The President decided to choose the latter. Although he  
I really didn't want this.

Nervousness was added to the situation by General Grachev. Terribly pleased that he remained on the sidelines, the Minister of Defense in another interview remarked, referring to the actions of Alpha:

It was possible to do everything there more competently, with the least losses and, most importantly, effectively: to prevent the bandits from leaving. Done mediocre, everything mediocre!" Grachev's statement came just on the day when Alpha was burying their comrades who died in Budennovsk. Grachev has always been distinguished by an increased sense of tact. The enraged "Alfa" did not fail to remind the Minister of Defense how much he was already busy in Chechnya, how many people he put there and what he achieved. Should he talk about someone

mediocrity?

Under these squabbles, the President dismissed Erin, Stepashin and Yegorov.

The latter was very keenly worried about the beginning of negotiations with Chechnya, considering the end of the war as a personal insult. He urged to continue the war to the bitter end and in an interview with one of the Kuban newspapers even expressed his readiness to enter the armed forces as a "contractor" and fight Dudayev to the last drop of blood. Of course, he did not risk anything, knowing that they would not be accepted into the "contractors", and therefore, as always, he called for fighting to the last drop of someone else's blood.

Soon, however, Yerin was appointed Deputy Director of Foreign Intelligence, which was perceived by the public with laughter. We always laugh first and then cry.

Then Yegorov also surfaced. It turns out that the President appointed the former minnat as Chairman of the Council for Cossack Affairs under the President of the Russian Federation, and a little later as his assistant for nationalities and regional politics. So expect an invasion somewhere else.

Only Stepashin is still out of work. In reserve. Yeltsin was very offended by him for the "misinformation" about Dudayev's readiness to escape to Turkey, received from the FSB.

All this speaks, first of all, of how narrow the circle of people becomes, whom the President, for reasons known only to him, for some reason believes that he can trust. These people, abandoned by the democratic wave instead of garbage dumps for the highest and most important government positions, cannot even be called "incompetent" or "unprofessional." These are just clowns, putting one after another bloody buffoonery on the body of our dying country. Take a closer look at their faces and you will see for yourself. You will also see how quickly everything degrades. If in October 1993 the President was still quite deftly wielding a sword and "sharpening", then in December 1994 he already took up the crowbar, which, fortunately, turned out to be too heavy for him.

What tool will he need next to finally destroy the country?

Igor BUNICH, a retired naval officer, worked for many years in the archives, analyzing historical collisions and compiling analytical reviews for the leadership of the Naval Academy. He realized his analytical abilities in his first book, The Gold of the Party, which immediately became a world bestseller. This book continues the series of exciting chronicles by Igor BUNICH "The Case of the President", "The Sword of the President" and fully deserves the title "Scrap of the President", because it reflects the degradation of leadership in solving key problems from the totalitarian monster of the USSR to the "legal stepdaughter" of Russia.

Notes

Now, when the Kremlin is puzzling over how to reattach Abkhazia to Georgia as a gift to the "reformed" Shevardnadze, and Shumeiko publicly calls his friend Ardzinba "the same criminal as Dudayev", the Chechen-Abkhazian military alliance, which has actually taken shape, is being put together in order to everyone in the Caucasus felt very good

2

However, these memos can be called "Chechen" purely conditionally, as the vases produced by the Porcelain Factory in St. Petersburg are called "Chinese".

3

In the fight against false bank notes, as a rule, there is always "not enough evidence" and even the failure to return loans with great difficulty qualifies as a crime

4

The wolf, a Turkish symbol of freedom and independence, was received by Dudayev from admirers from the Gray Wolves organization during a visit to the island of Cyprus, where Dudayev traveled on business of Nikolai Egorov's Kuban Bank in 1993, settling financial affairs with Moscow "concessionaires" who were already in a rut. But ... "Wolf" he liked. "If you ever need me," Dudayev told the Turkish Cypriots, "Call me like a wolf. Like this: wow wow!"

5

Unidentified helicopters scattered copies of this "top secret" order over many villages in Chechnya from December 8 to December 10, 1994. We can't judge how authentic this order was, but Colonel-General Podkolzin, commander of the Airborne Forces, somehow let slip directly in a television interview that such an order existed. Annoyed by the fierce fighting in Grozny and the heavy losses in general, and of his paratroopers in particular, General Podkolzin noted that Grachev's mediocre tactics "prevented the organized deportation of the population to other regions of Russia.

6

The discovery of this fact cost the life of Dmitry Kholodov

7

By analogy, it can be assumed that under the leadership of Grachev, the battle for the hospital in Budennovsk would have lasted 3 months.

8

We are talking about negotiations that the OSCE tried unsuccessfully to establish.